

necessary, between his literary and mathematical attainments.—This, like some other remarks, seems to me to show that the examiner who is responsible for this part of the report has not realised—and, indeed, it must be hard to realise—our difficulties. Would he really propose that—to take an extreme, but very common, case—a boy who is fit for the Upper School in English and arithmetic, but knows *nothing* of Latin, French, natural science, or mathematics, should be placed in this way? (I have said “the examiner,” though elsewhere I have followed the report in using the plural. The examiners did, of course, confer together; but in the actual work of examination and inspection each confined himself strictly to certain branches.)

Proposal to specialise not new.—We must distinguish between the specialisation and the system by which it is proposed to facilitate it—that of non-redistribution for mathematics. In my opinion specialisation within moderate limits is desirable; though even this is not the opinion of all schoolmasters. It is not, with regard to the ordinary subjects, such as classics, English, and mathematics, essential in any but the highest Forms—and in these it can be and is carried out under our present system—or so important as to override other considerations. In the middle and lower Forms the teaching power of the master is far more important than the extent of his attainments.

Specialisation said to be a feature of Secondary Schools.—Yes, within the limits of the possible, but not to such an extent as to override the principle of reclassification, which is also a distinguishing feature of English secondary schools. In such a school as the Manchester Grammar School, in which, when I was a master there, there was a staff of over thirty masters, nearly all of whom were honour men of English Universities, the principles did not clash to any great extent. It was easy to have on the staff half a dozen mathematical honour men, and to employ most of their time in mathematical work. Still, even these took some general work, and the two or three lower masters who were not specialists took mathematics. The boys were very thoroughly reclassified. In very rich schools there is no difficulty: as many specialists as are required for the number of mathematical classes are employed, and the time not required by these is not given to teaching at all. But, without going further into details, I may say that I know of no great English school in which reclassification for mathematics is not practised. In Merchant Taylors' School, in which I was educated, the boys were completely redistributed; and every regular master except the headmaster taught mathematics.* Of New Zealand schools, the Dunedin High Schools are the only schools in which I know the system recommended by the examiners to be in force. From school-lists of the Christchurch Boys' High School, 1882, Christ's College Grammar School, 1882,† and Timaru High Schools, 1885, I find that redistribution was practised at those dates. In the case of the first the names of the masters assigned to each class are given, and I find that all the six assistant masters were teaching mathematics. At the Auckland Girls' High School the girls are separately distributed for every subject, so that nearly every teacher has to teach nearly everything. At the Sydney Grammar School the boys are redistributed, and no less than thirteen masters, being all the assistant masters except one regular and two visiting masters, teach mathematics. I must therefore claim the authority of the high-class schools at Home and in the colony for the present system.

French, Natural Science, and Drawing already committed to Specialists.—Necessarily, because these are subjects which general masters are rarely competent to teach, and which stand on a very different ground from that occupied by classics, English, and mathematics.

Employment of Specialists for other Subjects recommended.—Yes, as far as possible. It is strange that the examiners do not mention Latin, which has quite as good a claim to be taught by a specialist as mathematics. I doubt whether any master could be found who would be content to be merely or mainly a “geography master.” “As far as possible,” the tastes and special capabilities of masters are consulted. There is, however, a drawback when each Form goes to too many different masters, in that no one of them has enough to do with the boys to impress himself thoroughly upon them, to be responsible for their general tone and discipline, and to see that the home work is properly co-ordinated. The less time a master gets with the same boys the more difficult is the maintenance of discipline.

Natural Science Master to have Time for Preparation.—I wish it were possible to give the natural science master more time than he now has (namely, three hours a week) for this purpose, and also to provide him with an assistant, but have not ventured to suggest the necessary expenditure.

Gradual Change of System recommended.—Compromise is, so far as I can see, impossible. The two systems are mutually exclusive.

Sudden Change “might be attended by Unmerited Hardship.”—I suppose that this means that it might be necessary to dismiss some of the present masters, to replace them by specialists. This, however, would in my opinion be a futile attempt, at all events unless the Board is prepared to largely increase the salaries. Nine out of ten of those who in New Zealand offer themselves for masterships are not specialists, but “general masters.” It will be remembered that when, recently, the Board advertised a special mathematical mastership at a special salary, the election was deferred for want of a completely suitable candidate, and that ultimately only two or three who could be called specialists offered themselves. Still less can it be expected that ordinary posts, with the meagre salaries now attached to them, will command specialists.

Capabilities of Present Staff.—As to many of the masters, I should be puzzled, and so, I think, would they, to decide to which department they ought to be assigned. There would, indeed, be no difficulty in selecting three masters as specially marked out for teaching mathematics: Messrs.

* This school has since been completely reorganized, but still the boys are reclassified for mathematics.

† Since this was written I have obtained the school lists for 1885, and find that redistribution is now confined to the higher Forms. How many masters are employed does not appear, but the school appears to be, on the whole, worked on the system recommended by the examiners.