SESS. II.—1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

(REPORTS OF THE), TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, AND APPENDIX.

(JAMES G. WILSON, CHAIRMAN.)

Brought up on 2nd, 14th, and 15th December, 1887, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

WEDNESDAY, THE 2ND DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1887.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, with power to call for persons and papers, to inquire (1) if the present large expenditure on education can be reduced without unduly impairing the efficiency of the present system, or closing of the country schools; (2) in what direction (if any) any reduction should take place; (3) whether State aid can be given to denominational schools in large centres of population without injury to the State system of education; (4) is it advisable that Bible-reading shall be introduced into State schools? also to inquire into (5) the Native schools, their management and cost; and (6) generally into the working of the education system. The Committee to report thereon within a month; and to consist of Hon. Mr. Fisher, Mr. Allen, Mr. Beetham, Mr. Loughrey, Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Barron, Mr. Walker, Dr. Fitchett, and the mover. Three to be the quorum."—(Messrs. WILSON, SEDDON, and BLAKE.)

REPORTS.

No. 190.—Report on the Petition of Archdeacon GOVETT and Others.

PETITIONERS pray that the New Plymouth High School may be put under a separate Board of Governors, in common with the great majority of the high schools in the colony.

I have the honour to report that, in the opinion of the Committee, this petition should be referred to the Government; and the Committee recommends that all high schools be placed on the same footing.

2nd December, 1887.

Report on Petitions relative to BIBLE-READING in SCHOOLS.

A NUMBER of petitions in favour of Bible-reading in schools having been referred to the Education Committee,

I have the honour to report that, the subject-matter of the petitions having been disposed of for the present session, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

2nd December, 1887.

Report on Petitions relating to STATE AID towards DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS.

SEVERAL petitions from Roman Catholics and others, asking for State aid towards denominational schools, having been referred to the Committee for report,

I have the honour to report that, as the question is at present under the consideration of Parliament, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

14th December, 1887.

Nos. 460 and 461.—Report on the Petitions of ALEXANDER C. BEGG and FRANCIS WILKINSON.

PETITIONERS complain of the arbitrary conduct of the Otago Education Board in dismissing Mr. David McLaughlan from the position of headmaster of the Kaikorai School.

I have the honour to report that the Committee is of opinion that the subject-matter of the petition is one which concerns only the administration of the Education Act under the powers conferred upon Education Boards and School Committees, and that, if the Education Board did not first consult the School Committee before dismissing the teacher as alleged, the provisions of clause 45 of the Act have not been strictly complied with.

The Committee recommends (1) that the Government should take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the point raised, and transmit such opinion to the petitioners; (2) and, if the Act is not sufficiently clear as to the relative positions of the Boards and Committees, that the Government should amend the Act; (3) that, as there seems to be considerable feeling in the locality on the subject of the petitions, special inquiry by the Resident Magistrate of Dunedin should be made into the matter.

14th December, 1887.

GENERAL REPORT.

THE Committee has taken evidence upon the question of education—oral, when available, and written, from witnesses at a distance.

Some of the evidence has been printed and circulated among the members of the House for their information, and some more has yet to come in.

The Committee has to report that, in consequence of the evidence not being all to hand, and the shortness of time at its disposal to consider such a large question, it is not in a position to make any report this session, but recommends that a similar Committee should be again set up next session, when there would be time to take any further evidence necessary, give full consideration to the question, and make an exhaustive report.

Pending such report, the Committee is of opinion that it would be inadvisable at present to seriously interfere with the education system.

15th December, 1887.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 1887.—(Mr. J. G. WILSON, Chairman.)

Rev. J. W. HABENS, Inspector-General of Schools, in attendance and examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You have seen, Mr. Habens, the order of reference?—I have.

2. Would you like to make any statement with regard to it; such, for instance, as would give the Committee information with regard to raising the school-age?—I should prefer that the Chairman should ask me questions, for the order of reference is so wide that I might not always be able to know, in giving the Committee information, whether I was going in a direction that would be useful to the Committee.

3. Then I shall ask you what would be the effect of raising the school-age from five years to seven?—That must to a certain extent be a matter of estimate founded upon statistics. The statistics that would be a basis for such an estimate appear on page 4 of the last report under Table D, where it is shown that, of the children in attendance at the end of last year, nearly 20 per cent.—actually 19·77—were under seven years of age. It cannot, however, be assumed that by raising the school-age to seven there would be a saving of 19·77, for no one can say whether the children between seven and five are the more regular in attendance or the older children, and payment of capitation is not made according to the number on the roll but according to the average attendance.

4. Are there no comparative tables showing the regular attendance?—There are no statistics to show the exact number of attendances of children under seven years of age in the schools, but I think it may be assumed that the proportion would be about 19·77 per cent., which is the proportion of children under seven on the rolls.

5. You are aware that there is a proposal to raise the school-age from five to six years?—The only estimate that I could get would be an approximate one, based upon the supposition that, of the children at school between five and seven, one-half are under and one-half over six. I have no means of arriving at the truth more accurately by any other supposition.

6. Do you not think that as they grow older the larger would be the proportion attending school?—I have considered that aspect of the question, but I am unable to arrive at any basis, except the division of the number into two equal parts. Whether such a division affords a perfectly fair estimate or not I have no means of knowing. I may state that during my last round of inspection I made a point of asking the headmasters of large schools if they could give me any idea whether the attendance of the infant classes was more regular or less regular than that of the older classes. I was not able to obtain from them anything like a definite answer. Such was the result of my inquiry of men who have the whole subject practically before their eyes.

7. What means has the department of ascertaining accurately the ages of the children attending the schools? You will, perhaps, have observed that it was given out in a debate which occurred in the House yesterday, that if there was an exclusion at a certain age, there would be a considerable number of children coming forward and claiming to be older than they really were, so as to secure the payment of capitation. My question is as to what means you have of ascertaining accurately the ages of children: do you require that certificates of registration of birth should be produced?—I would refer you to the regulation made by Order in Council of the 5th July, 1887. The sixth section of the first part of that Order in Council relates to the quarterly return of attendances from each school. That paper is on the table. I am referring more particularly to the form of the return. According to this form a statement is made by the headmaster of the school with respect to the ages of the children. The number of pupils on the roll is analysed, so that there is a statement of the ages of the children between five and seven, between seven and ten, between ten and thirteen, between thirteen and fifteen, and above fifteen. This return is signed by the principal teacher of the school and countersigned by the Chairman of the School Committee. But the regulation does not prescribe how the headmaster shall satisfy himself with respect to the age of each of the children.

8. What do you think is the general effect of discipline and teaching on these younger children?—Considering the early age at which the children of the artisan and the labourer ordinarily leave school, I am of opinion that it is necessary to admit such children to school at an early age in order that their school-course may be of reasonable length; and that, in schools which are sufficiently organized to provide instruction upon proper methods for children between five and seven years of age, such children derive a very great benefit from the discipline and instruction which they receive, and are thereby prepared for the severer methods of instruction that will follow in the more advanced classes. I think it should also be remembered that the children of the same class, if they are not at school at an early age, are likely to receive a practical education out-of-doors that, however advantageous it may be to them from a physical point of view, is perhaps very detrimental from a moral and intellectual point of view. I may add that, if we regard the example set by England in this matter, the English Government recognises the attendance of children just above three years of age as entitling the schools they attend to grants from the Treasury.

9. Then you do not think that attendance at school should be confined to a particular age?—Not if the school is so organized as to provide the proper methods of instruction.

10. Do you think the schools in this colony are so organized?—In the larger towns we have large schools which have large so-called infant classes, in which the proper methods of instruction and discipline are observed.

11. We have heard a good deal of the kindergarten system: would it not be easier to provide instruction for infant classes under that system, better for the child and less costly to the State?—So far as my knowledge of the subject goes, I may state that the kindergarten system, in its full development, requires so large a staff of trained teachers, and is therefore so costly, as to be adapted only to what might be called middle-class instruction. The principles, however, that underlie the kindergarten method are the true principles of all infant instruction—I think I may say the true principles of all instruction—and in all well-organized infant schools the most important principles of the kindergarten system are recognised and acted upon. I know of the existence of some so-called kindergarten schools in New Zealand, but I believe they are by no means fully developed under the kindergarten system. They are practically infant schools with teachers who have some knowledge of kindergarten practice. With regard to the expense of infant schools in which there is an infusion of the kindergarten element without the full development of the kindergarten methods and practice, they are not very expensive schools to maintain. As a matter of fact, the Boards obtain a large proportion of the means to maintain the costly district schools in outlying places by the savings they are able to effect in the management of their large infant schools, upon which they expend, it may be, 25s. a head per annum, receiving from the State the full capitation. I think the saving referred to in the question is being practically made all over the country.

12. I asked you, Mr. Habens, whether, in your opinion, there would be any saving in adopting the kindergarten method for infant classes. I take it for granted that you have seen it stated that there is a kindergarten school in Tinakori Road, which is doing good work, and it is said to be carried on at a very small cost?—My answer is that it is probably not a fully-developed kindergarten school. I have no doubt it is an infant school, with a large infusion of the kindergarten principle adopted by the teachers, but not in the strict sense a fully-developed kindergarten school. My opinion is based on what I know of the expense of a thorough kindergarten school.

13. You say that the cost of the young children is about 25s.?—Yes, I put it roughly at 25s. I will not pledge myself to the figure, but I may find an illustration of it in looking through the report, if you will allow me to do so. I would refer you to page 26 of the Appendix of the last Education Report, where it will be seen that the Mount Cook Infant School in Wellington had an average attendance of 358 children, and the salaries of teachers amounted to £760. I would refer you also to page 22 of the same Appendix, where it is stated that in the Wanganui Infant School, with an average attendance of 278 children, the teachers' salaries amounted to £390. I may state that many of the larger infant schools are included in the general statistics of the main schools to which they belong, so that this Appendix does not show the specific cost of their infant departments.

14. *Mr. Ormond.*] Is that generally so, or is it the exception that the infant schools are included in the large schools?—I see that I can find one or two rare instances where the cost of the infant department is given separately; but it is generally and almost as a rule included in the total for the school.

15. *The Chairman.*] I have been told that the cost of the school referred to in the Tinakori Road is much less. I understand that the fee charged for very young children is 3d., and 6d. a week for others; that would come to very much less than 25s. Do you know anything as to the fees charged in that school?—My wife lately sent a child to the Tinakori Road Kindergarten School—a child between three and four years of age. I understood that the payment was 6d. a week. But I should observe that school does not come in any way within the scope of my official knowledge I therefore cannot answer the question positively.

16. Do you think it is as good as your infant schools?—I could not say anything as to that without seeing the school.

17. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Am I right in taking it that, in the matter of excluding children under six years, teachers and parents would have a common interest; that capitation would be paid on children over six, and no capitation under six?—I think that the interest of parents and teachers in that matter would be common.

18. As to the effect of teaching upon children of tender years, is there any undue mental strain involved?—In a properly-organized school I think the exercise is pleasant and healthful, and does not involve any mental strain.

19. *Mr. Ormond.*] Have you expressed any opinion as to the results in regard to expenditure between five years and six years?—I think the results are well worth the money the Boards pay for the so-called infant classes.

20. Do you agree that there is great diversity of opinion among specialists on this point?—I am aware there is much diversity of opinion upon the matter, but I think that diversity of opinion is partly due to the fact that many who condemn the early attendance of children at school are not sufficiently informed as to the methods of discipline and instruction adopted in schools which are specially adapted to children under seven years of age. Objection on the ground of mental strain could scarcely be advanced by any one who knew how light and gentle the discipline is, and how pleasant the method of imparting instruction.

21. Would you confine your opinion to the expression of a judgment that discipline only would be the result as regards children between five and six years of age?—I have included discipline and instruction, regarding both as of very high value, the instruction being very important as affording a basis for the further instruction that will be given in the more advanced part of their educational course.

22. Then your view is that that would not be overtaken between six and seven years?—Not so well overtaken.

23. *Mr. Walker.*] You have not quite taken up Mr. Ormond's question. He asked whether specialists differed on a certain point, and you replied that certain people were not well informed?—I think it will be found that I admitted the diversity of opinion. I should, however, like to say, before leaving this point, that the attendance of very young children in a school where there is only one teacher creates very great difficulties in the conduct of the school; and, further, that these young children in such a school cannot receive a due share of attention or be taught according to the method suited to their years. My opinion as to the admission to school of children of five years of age is connected with the provision of suitable methods of instruction and discipline.

24. From what you said last, I take it you would have the Committee to infer that, in your opinion, the country schools are not in the same position as the town schools in relation to this part of the subject?—That is quite my meaning.

25. Do you think, Mr. Habens, that, as regards the whole bearing of this question, people who object to the early age of commencing school are very much confused in their ideas regarding its importance, as to whether the children belong to labouring parents, or parents who belong to what we would call the middle class?—I think there is some confusion of ideas.

26. A member of the House has said that he would not allow his children to be put to school before they were seven years old. Before that age, in his case, presumably his children were in the nursery under the establishment of a certain discipline imposed by attendance of persons on them. Such is not the case with children of parents of the labouring class. It is mainly, therefore, with regard to these that you were speaking?—In a former part of my evidence I think I said that the children of the labourer and the artisan ought to be specially considered. They have not the advantage of the nursery and suitable attendance at the earliest age; they are not receiving before the school-age that practical education which the children of the professional class, for instance, receive from mere intercourse with their parents.

27. You would not argue from one class to the other, and say that, because the child of a well-to-do man need not go to school before seven years of age, all need not go?—I think the different conditions of children ought to be considered. The children of the labourer and the artisan, because they will leave school and go to work at an early age, ought to be admitted to school earlier.

28. So far as you know, then, in a well-ordered school there is no complaint on the subject of undue pressure?—If the question applies to very young children, I would say that, as to these, I have never heard of over-pressure. I have heard of over-pressure from too much home-work being given to children more advanced—that is, in the upper classes—but I have never heard of mental strain in regard to the younger children.

29. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] What specific meaning do you attach to the phrase which you used towards the commencement of your evidence, "detrimental in a moral and intellectual point of view"?—I had in my mind the possibility of children running in the streets.

30. Did you mean the contamination of bad company and idleness?—I mean that children playing in the streets without control or supervision are apt to acquire bad manners and form bad habits.

31. Do you not think the same manners, habits, or language may be imported into the schools. Five years is not an arbitrary age to begin to learn evil, and if the evil may be imported into the school it might become so that the difference would be little whether the child was outside or in?—The difference would be this: that in school the children are under discipline during school-hours; outside they are not.

32. Is there any danger, in your opinion, of the confirmation of habits of idleness the longer a child remains away from school over five years?—I should not attach much value to any such consideration. I should not, if there were a difference between two children with respect to habits of indolence, attribute that difference to the mere circumstance that one of the children had acquired a habit of indolence, but to the want of training. It is the want of training that is the great disadvantage.

33. Am I right in supposing that the sooner a child goes to school the sooner he picks up knowledge—knowledge without system or effort?—I do not know that I understand the point of the question.

34. I beg your pardon. I admit that my question, as I put it, was faulty; but I have heard many people say, and it appears to be generally understood, that children of tender years do break down under the school-system. What I want to know is, do these children of tender years absorb knowledge without much systematic effort beyond the mere attendance?—In the first place, I would answer that I do not think a child of tender years is capable of much systematic effort, and if that is demanded of him the result will be not only failure but probably serious injury to his mental constitution. But in a school so organized and taught as to be suited to children of tender years a very considerable amount of information is obtained, and there is some value in the training of their mental powers without appreciable straining of their faculties. At the same time, I believe that, in a school where the method of teaching is not adapted to children of tender years, the absence of anything to call forth the child's interest is likely to create a habit of listlessness and indifference to any instruction. I feel very strongly with regard to children sent at a very early age to school where there is no proper provision suited to their age. They are a trouble to the master, the time hangs heavily on their hands, and they must look on the school as a place of very disagreeable detention.

35. In all your experience, did you ever know a child of good ordinary physique to break down through school-work in a well-conducted school?—I can only say that I cannot recall an instance.

36. I ask the question because I have heard that frequently stated?—I have not myself ever met with such a case.

37. You know of no case of the kind?—No; I cannot recall a case; but I think there is a distinction to be drawn in the case of children of a delicate organization, with great nervous susceptibility, more especially if they are ambitious and emulous; they may overstrain themselves in reading up for a scholarship or prize. But I think that, generally, in a state of robust physical health a child is not likely to devote himself to study unduly so as to cause overstraining. On the contrary, he is more likely to direct himself to physical recreation. I mean to say that where there is good health and functional activity boys will want to romp and play.

38. Then you think that the danger of breaking down from school-work at an early age is not to be regarded?—I think it has scarcely ever existed.

39. *Mr. Barron.*] Should there be, in your opinion, any distinction between the education given to children that are supposed to enter on the active duties of life at thirteen and that given to children who may be supposed to have time to devote to their education until it should be complete: what I ask is, would you make any difference from the foundation upwards between one case and the other?—I am of opinion that there is no need to differentiate the studies of such children until about the age of twelve on the average. I may state that in this respect my views have undergone some change within the last few years. Seven or eight years ago I was disposed to think that a differentiation should take place at about ten years of age. My observation of the progress made by children who have gone with Board scholarships to the higher schools at the age of twelve, with no learning beyond that provided in the standard syllabus, leads me to think that twelve is a better age than ten at which to begin to make any distinction. I think that a boy who begins to learn Latin at twelve is likely to be as much interested in it at eighteen, and to know as much of it, as if he had begun at eight years. As with other subjects, Latin cannot create an interest in the mind until a certain age and a certain degree of development have been reached.

40. In the case of a child that had to go into the world to earn his own living at thirteen or fourteen years of age, do you think it better that he should finish his course in the primary school, or that he should have the advantage of instruction on one, two, or three subjects that are taught to children in the secondary schools: which do you think would be better towards the future success of such a child in the world?—For the child who is to leave school at thirteen I think that the last three years spent in the primary school would be more likely to be useful to him than the same time spent in the elementary part of the work of the secondary school. Leaving the secondary school at the age of thirteen he would be found to have acquired only the beginnings of several subjects, and he would have reached no very useful degree of attainment in any.

41. Do you think it would be an improvement that a rudimentary knowledge of Latin should be taught in the primary schools within the period during which a child is there?—My impression is that, in the case of children whose education is to include any useful amount of Latin, the secondary school is the proper place for them after the age of twelve.

42. I am keeping in view the child who wants to go into the world at thirteen or fourteen years of age: whether elementary instruction in the higher subjects would be of importance to him?—I can conceive of elementary knowledge of Latin obtained during the last two or three years of primary school-life, supposing it to have been imparted by an enthusiastic and capable teacher, being a very valuable instrument of mental development, as laying the foundation of logical habits of thought, and as creating a taste for literary exactness; but for the ordinary child, in the hands of an ordinary teacher, I think that the Latin that would be learned in the last year or two of a school-life closing at thirteen or fourteen would not be of any great service.

43. I suppose there is a uniformity in the system of teaching in all the primary schools?—They all work according to the standards by which the subjects are prescribed. There is no doubt, however, that the idiosyncracies of teachers infuse variety into the system as regulated by the standards. One teacher, for example, with an enthusiastic love of history, will give prominence to that subject, and make it interesting to his pupils; while another, who takes no interest in it himself, will treat the history-lesson as a mere task, and will be quite content if, in some mechanical way, he can prepare the children to pass the standard examination upon it. Such a teacher, however, may be himself enthusiastic with respect to other subjects of the school-course.

44. *Dr. Fitchett.*] I should like to ask the witness to what extent he considers our infant schools efficiently organized for proper infant teaching?—I think that in any school where there are three or four teachers satisfactory provision for infant children can be made.

45. Can you give any account of the number?—I can only give you an approximate answer: perhaps between one-third and one-fourth of the schools are able to make, what I consider, proper provision; but, as these are all comparatively large schools, they provide for a very large proportion of the children of the country.

46. *The Chairman.*] I gather from you that your experience is quite different as regards country schools?—The reason is that in small country schools there is not a sufficient number of teachers to make it possible to have properly-organized junior departments. The sending a child there at too early an age might perhaps do him as much harm as good, owing to the absence of the proper methods of instruction suited to young children. His attendance there might result in a permanent dislike to school as being an uninteresting place.

47. Do you agree that it would be advisable to raise the age in respect to children attending country schools, so as not to allow them to go there at such an early age?—If the question were simply as to the mere "advisability" in the interest of these children of admitting them at that age I should say, "Yes." But the question is complicated by other serious considerations. One consideration is this: that under the capitation allowance the income of the Boards, and consequently the fund from which the teacher's salary is derived, depends on the number of children attending. Every child between five and six counts for one, and is paid for by the State. It is the payment for the large number of these young children that makes it possible for the Board to maintain a larger number of schools than could otherwise be maintained.

48. That would result in this: that the children would permanently suffer from attending for the sake of keeping up these schools. Rather than that should be the case, would it not be better to give a differential rate?—I think it might be better to give a differential rate. But I should like to point out that those children who may so suffer are afterwards the gainers by the existence of a school which would not have been in existence if the capitation for their attendance had not been paid.

49. Would it not be better to lower the number requisite for the opening of the school?—I cannot say that I understand the question; but I may state that there is no Government rule as to the number of children necessary to constitute a school. The boards differ in their practice in this respect. There are boards which recognise four children as constituting a school, and there are others which will not establish a school unless there is an attendance of twenty-five. In the case of a district that would not be allowed to have a school unless there were an attendance of twenty-five, that number can sometimes only be made up by the attendance of five or six children of the age to which some of the questions put to me have referred. Those children, if they suffer something during the early years of school-age life, are, on the whole, gainers by having a school in their district which would not be there unless their attendance had been counted when they were young. It is a difficult matter to put clearly before the Committee, but I hope my meaning is clear. I may here refer to another question. I have been asked whether it would be impossible to have a differential rate. I think it is very difficult. It might be possible, but there are great difficulties in the way of the application of a differential rate.

50. *Mr. Ormond.*] As to the proportionate cost to the department of the several establishments for children under seven years, have you any means of arriving at an opinion about that?—I do not think I can say more than I said just now. I have referred to a list of several schools called infant schools, pointing out that there were cases where the cost was considerably less than the capitation allowance.

51. Our Inspector puts it at 30s.?—I have said 25s.

52. *Mr. Walker.*] You stated that of about 20 per cent. of the children between the ages of five and seven, one-half that number would be over six?—I said that I did not know how to get an estimate except by halving that number.

53. Do you think that there are 10 per cent., or less or more, attending country schools?—I have no reason to think that there is any great difference in the proportions. There is one cause of the early attendance in country schools that I should refer to, it is this: that the parents in some districts fear that, unless the attendance is kept up, they may be deprived of their school. On that account they send their children to school at an earlier age than they would otherwise care to do; but whether the distances make attendance at country schools more difficult, I cannot say; I cannot find anything to go upon. I have made inquiry, but I cannot find anything to enable me to say positively whether it is so. I cannot get anything further than that there is a tendency to send the children earlier so as to keep up the required number of attendances.

54. You have stated that there is no general rule observed by Boards in establishing these small country schools; that one Board differed from another in the practice with regard to that?—There is a great difference. I was Secretary at one time to the Board of Education for the Canterbury District. At that time the North Canterbury Board would not entertain proposals for the establishment of a school unless there was a prospective average attendance of twenty-five.

55. A "prospective" attendance?—They would not shut up a school because it had fallen to twenty-four, but they were willing to give a substantial subsidy, considerably exceeding the capitation paid by Government, to people who would establish a school on a private basis. In the Nelson District there are some so-called schools consisting of three or four children each. I believe these are not schools in the sense of being gatherings of children, but practically they are household schools, each one instituted on the basis of a particular family. At Elmsley Bay there is a school of three, receiving an allowance from the Board of £12. At Blue Glen there is a school of four, receiving an allowance also of £12. In Marlborough District there is a school at Robin Hood Bay consisting of five children, and receiving a subsidy of £15. At McMahon's there is a school of five children, receiving a subsidy also of £15.

56. *Mr. Ormond.*] Are the teachers members of these families?—I have no means of knowing.

57. *Mr. Walker.*] Does the department interfere with the Board's discretionary powers in the matter of regulations?—On this particular subject the matter is placed by the Act within the discretion of the Board, so that the department can have no voice upon it.

58. *Mr. Ormond.*] Is there any general system of "aided" schools under the different Boards, that is, special schools for a small number of children?—There is a section of the Act which authorises the Boards to dispense aid to such schools.

59. Is there any general system applied by the different Boards under which that aid is given "under conditions"?—The Act leaves the administration of this aid solely in the discretion of the Boards, and the Boards are not called upon to report on the matter.

60. But surely each Board reports in regard to its aided schools?—The Board can make a statement as to the number of such schools. I find that at the end of December, 1886, the number of such schools was 119. There is no general system applied to them. Each Board has its own system.

61. Are these systems analogous or not?—I should like to have time to see what I can find in the reports.

62. The Committee, I think, would like to find out what the aid is in different districts, and the rate per head at which these districts give aid. Will you also be good enough to give the average attendance at such schools?—A return will be made of these 119 schools, of their attendance, and of the amounts received by each, and their capitation.

63. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Assuming the existence of two children of the same age, physique, and mental calibre, one going to school at five years of age, and remaining at school until fourteen, the other going to school at seven, and remaining there until sixteen, does such difference in their treatment, in your opinion, give one a scholastic advantage?—If the comparison is between two children of the artisan and labouring class, I think that one would have the advantage which went to school at five and left at fourteen.

64. I am assuming that they went to the same school with the same advantages?—I think if the child belongs to what may be called refined people, getting the practical education which his position is calculated to give at the earliest age, such child could afford to wait until seven years. I think there is certainly a class distinction in this respect.

65. Then the result, in your opinion, is this: that, assuming these two children to be of the same class, you think that the child which goes earliest to school and leaves earliest will, in a scholastic sense, have an advantage as compared with the child which goes to school later and leaves later?—I should say that it depends on the kind of home the children came from: from one class of home I would let them go to school at five, from another class of home they need not go to school until seven. If two children belong to a class where what I have called the practical education of home-life is efficient, it would, I think, be better for them to go to school at seven; but if the two children have no such advantages in their earliest years it would be better for them to go at five and leave at fourteen.

66. *The Chairman.*] There is another question which I would ask you, but perhaps it may be left to the next examination, viz., as to payment by parents for the higher standards, or upon conditions, or by permission of Committees—in effect, whether the present system is as economical and efficient a one as can be made?

Mr. Ormond: What I propose to ask in the course of future examination is, if the different Boards have separate scales of salaries for the different classes of the staff employed by each, and if the witness would make a comparison of them; also if the witness could make an allocation of salaries for schools of different grades. It would also be a great advantage if the Committee had before it the different regulations made by the different Boards.

FRIDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 1887.

Dr. BROWN, Chairman of the Otago Board of Education in attendance, and examined.

67. *The Chairman.*] A circular was forwarded to you containing a number of questions upon which the Committee desire to get information: have you seen that circular?—This is the first time I have seen the circular, and I am therefore somewhat handicapped in giving the answers to the several questions. The first question is as to raising the school-age, upon which capitation allowance is paid. If I am to give an opinion, speaking as a medical man, I think that children, in the majority of cases, are sent too school too early. I do not think that for the purposes of real education the majority of children derive much benefit from schooling under six or seven years of age. During the early years of childhood I think that the best use that can be made of a child's time is to help him to get as sound and healthy a bodily organism as possible. At the same time I must say that, having gone carefully into this question of capitation allowance, and its bearing on the cost of education, I fail to see how, as long as the State continues to have the control of education in its hands, this system can be maintained unless the school-age is retained pretty much as it is, or the capitation allowance is increased: that is, if the school-age is raised from five years to seven, I think the capitation allowance for children in average attendance at the public schools ought to be increased.

68. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] I suppose, Dr. Brown, you are referring to the statutory capitation of £3 15s.?—I refer to the allowance, £3 19s., as it is at present.

69. Do I understand you to mean that £3 19s. would be ample if the age were raised to six years, but if raised to seven the capitation would, in your opinion, require to be increased?—Yes.

70. *Dr. Fitchett.*] You say that you think the children are sent too early too school: does not that depend upon the sort of instruction they get, and the sort of accommodation that exists?—Yes; but assuming the instruction to be intelligent, and the accommodation fit, I consider that at the present school-age children would get no harm from attendance at school, and the form of instruction they get there—supposing the hours are not too long. I lay great stress on that point. I put special emphasis on this point, so far as it relates to the school hours. I think they are at present too long for infants. I fail to see what benefit is derived from an attendance of four hours—two hours in the forenoon, and two hours in the afternoon—for very young children.

71. Is the present accommodation fit?—It has been made as fit as possible; that is, as fit as we could make it in Otago.

72. Do you not think that a child would be better off, even if kept in premises not actually adapted to his use, than if he were running in the streets?—I do not.

73. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] You think that under any circumstances the child would be better in the open air, enjoying any healthful form of recreation?—I do.

74. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Are you speaking as a medical man, or from experience generally? Is it theory, or the result of experience?—A theory to be worth anything is founded upon experience.

75. Do I understand you to mean that, so far as this opinion of yours goes, it was a theory, but it has been now adopted as the result of past experience?—My opinion is based on experience and observation.

76. *The Chairman.*] As to the second question?—With regard to fees for the higher standards I am in this position: that my individual opinion is probably not worth anything, so that it may clash

with an official utterance. Individually, not being a socialist, I cannot say that I see the necessity of the Government doing everything for us that might be as well done by private enterprise; but, since education has been taken in hand by the Government, and made free and compulsory, I am of opinion that fees should not be exacted under the present system.

77. Then, bearing on that, it follows that you think the full six standards should be taught free?—Yes; under the present system.

78. In effect, then, you think that it is the duty of the State to find a free education?—Under the present system of education I think fees should not be charged, because the Government, in monopolizing the whole of the education of the people, has shut the door against any private enterprise in this direction.

79. *Mr. Allen.*] Do you know that there are many boys in the higher schools who could not pass the Fifth and Sixth Standards in the elementary schools? Could you give us any comparative estimate of the cost of teaching boys in the elementary and in the higher schools?—I could have prepared such an estimate if I had known it would be required.

80. We have heard that the difference of cost is something considerable?—This is to be borne in mind, that without the attendance of the lower forms in the high schools—I presume you mean the boys in the lower forms—it would be impossible for the higher schools to keep up the requisite staff. This overlapping is necessary to some extent in order to obtain a sufficient staff for the higher instruction.

81. Are they more costly in the higher schools?—Necessarily so, but not to the extent that is generally imagined. If the Committee wish it I will send up what notes I have on the subject. You will then find that the realative cost has been much overrated.

82. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Do I understand you to say that it is necessary to keep up these lower classes?—The fees derived from the attendance of children below the stage at which they would pass from the elementary school are a necessary source of income to the higher schools, if the higher schools are to be fully equipped for their work.

83. Is it not a fact that there are separate teachers in some schools, and will not these fees go to pay these teachers?—Undoubtedly.

84. *Mr. Allen.*] I understand you to say that the surplus does not come from what the State pays, but from what the parent pays?—Yes.

85. Can you say what effect the abolition of the Sixth Standard would have on the pupil-teachers?—It would be very prejudicial not only in respect of the supply, but also of the quality of the pupil-teachers generally. I think it would be one of the most disastrous things that could happen in our education system if we were to adopt any plan by which the standard of culture among our teachers should be lowered, and that would be the result of abandoning the Sixth Standard.

86. I take that to imply that if the Sixth Standard were abolished some equivalent would have to be provided for procuring teachers to do the work they do?—Yes.

87. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] You say that because the State assumes a "monopoly" of education, and because it exercises a compulsory power, therefore the State ought to pay for all the education given in the higher standards; but, if that compulsory power exists only between the ages of, say, seven and thirteen, do you think the State should pay for the education that is given beyond these compulsory limits?—Yes; for this reason: By the present system of education all effectual private enterprise in the way of education is shut out. There are comparatively few teachers who can make a living by teaching outside of the Government employment. If you do not provide an education up to the Fifth or Sixth Standard the position in regard to fees, I imagine, will be this: a serious effect upon attendance after passing the Fourth Standard, so serious that it must greatly lessen the capitation allowance, and in that way lessen the efficiency, and so cripple the working of the Act very considerably.

88. In addition to being a medical man, Dr. Brown, you are the Chairman of the Otago Education Board. What is your opinion on this point: Is it possible to give a sound and useful education within the period of the six compulsory years?—It depends on what is meant by a sound and useful education. If it is meant that you are to teach the use of the tools and instruments of knowledge, such as reading, writing, and casting up accounts, certainly it is possible.

89. You say it is?—Certainly.

90. *Mr. Barron.*] I heard you say that you thought four hours a day in school too much for very young children?—Yes.

91. Are you aware that it is more frequently the home lessons that do harm?—There are no home lessons for infants.

92. You spoke of children under seven years of age?—With reference to home lessons I have a very strong opinion. The mischief done by them is often very great. Home lessons from seven up to nine and ten years of age are often more detrimental to health than in any way helpful to the intelligence. When imposed upon children before nine or ten years of age they are a farce and a cruelty.

93. *Mr. Fisher.*] Not only a farce, but injurious?—Yes; injurious.

94. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Are you now speaking of the mental strain caused by them?—The mental strain, the anxiety, the worry they occasion to undergrown children. Add to this the effects which are caused by the defective accommodation which we all know must exist in the ordinary workman's home. The child has to be in a room where the other members of the family are busily engaged about their own duties; under frequent interruption he has to do what is very difficult for even grown people to do, that is, to keep his mind concentrated on one subject. Then there is the anxiety of writing his paper, then the writing by an artificial light, so that we find when the child goes to bed he dreams about these lessons; all this leads up to a life of worry and a dislike

of anything in the nature of instruction or educational work. I am quite certain that the distaste for reading which we sometimes observe in young people after leaving school, a great deal of the larrikinism which we see in towns, and a great deal of the dislike of intellectual labour of any kind which is so common arise from the the absurd method of examining schools throughout the world.

95. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Do I understand you that the result is influenced by payment by passes?—Yes; payment by passes sets a premium upon it.

96. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Did you ever know of a boy of good physical constitution breaking down under this strain?—Yes, several.

97. Several?—I cannot mention the number. I should require to think before stating the number; but it is an occurrence that happens within my experience frequently. I do not know the exact number of times that it has occurred; but when it does happen it does not strike me as strange; so that it must have happened frequently.

98. Does that happen from study alone?—I differ from you in calling it "study;" I do not think it is. I do not think the process they go through can by any stretch of charity be called study. It is a process of worry and anxiety; it is not study. These young people are worried about passing their examinations; they have anxiety as to the result; they are under the time-pressure that is involved in the examination taking place on a certain day; they have the fear of possible failure through the time being fixed, and on the day of examination they work at high pressure. All this happens to both girls and boys. It is particularly severe in the case of girls, and the result is that a break-down is not uncommon.

99. Are you not assuming that it is general?—It is very common, especially among girls. Girls have not the relief of outdoor sports which boys have during their school-life. Girls are ambitious, emulous, and set great store by school distinctions. Girls do break down very frequently. I am not speaking now of children of tender years, but of children in the higher classes.

100. What age?—I think I can recall cases of children breaking down and taken away from schools of about nine or ten years of age and upwards.

101. Does it not occur to you that the anxiety of the playground might be equal to the worry of the school?—If you are serious in putting the question I must say that I do not think so.

102. *Dr. Fitchett.*] What remedy would you suggest: a diminution of the pass-system or a change in the method of payment?—One would be a diminution of the pass system; another would be a more judicious interpretation by Inspectors of their duties. I think the modern craze of testing everything by written examinations has got such a hold of the Inspectors that they have lost their common-sense. The teachers themselves cannot help it.

103. *The Chairman.*] But, speaking of breaking down, is the Committee to understand that you have seen children who had to be kept from school several days in the week in order to obviate this mental strain?—Yes; that is common.

Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie: All I can say is that we have evidence here that such a thing is very rare. Perhaps the Chairman would read the evidence given on that point.

Dr. Fitchett: The Committee would hardly have for its object to put the opinion of one witness in conflict with another.

Hon. Mr. Fisher: It is necessary to have the independent opinion of each witness on the record, irrespective of position or the authority with which each of them might speak on the subject.

104. *The Chairman.*] But you have seen such cases of break-down?—Yes. I have said so; it is is not uncommon. Then, as to the economical working of the Act, we had this subject before the Otago Board. They made a number of suggestions, under the impression that the capitation allowance was certain to be reduced, and that the school-age was to be raised. These recommendations were made, however, with very great reluctance. The Board was extremely sorry to have to make them; but it was considered desirable to be prepared. If teachers' salaries must be reduced, it is necessary that they should have three months' notice. Some members of the Board considered that the raising of the school-age and the lowering of the capitation allowance ought to be undertaken. Personally, I must say that I differ from them, because of the very great dislocation that the altered circumstances would cause. The difference between raising the school-age to six and seven years will also be a very material one. I can best illustrate that by quoting, as far as I can trust my memory, some figures. There are, roughly speaking, twenty thousand children on the school rolls in the Otago Educational District; between eighteen and nineteen thousand are to be numbered in the average attendance. Capitation is paid on about nineteen thousand. I think I am nearly right in that. The number of children under seven years of age, out of the twenty thousand on the roll, is four thousand; that is, two out of every ten children are under seven, so that raising the school-age will make a very material difference in our income. Raising it to six years would not be so material, for out of these four thousand there are only about twelve hundred children who are under six years; that is to say, less than one-third—speaking roughly—of the number of children under seven are between five and six years of age.

105. Are you speaking of the average?—We have no way of ascertaining the average of school attendance except through the number on the roll. I think it runs to about 1,175 for children under six years who are to be placed among the average attendance. The Board, as I have said, have made suggestions that may be acted upon if the school-age is raised and the capitation fee reduced. These suggestions are, slightly lowering the teachers' salaries, lowering the amounts to be paid as bonuses, lessening the grants to Committees, reducing various items of office and other expenditure.

106. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Do you dissent from them or approve?—I approve of the way in which our straitened circumstances are to be met—if they are to be straitened—but I cannot say I approve of the policy of straitening them.

107. *The Chairman.*] Have you considered whether it would be wise to reduce the amount paid to Boards—whether there is a possibility of working the Act more economically, having regard to efficiency?—I do not think you can combine the same extent of efficiency with a lessened expenditure. With a lessened expenditure you may have a certain amount of efficiency, but the result would not be as good as at present. I do not think our Board wastes anything of its expenditure. There are some large items of expenditure besides the amount paid to teachers. The amount paid to School Committees is £6,000, and a number of repairs of various kinds have to be paid for, but these amounts are for necessary work.

108. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Do you think the number of Boards might be reduced?—That is a matter of which I am not competent to judge.

109. Do you think that the salaries of teachers are excessive?—No.

110. Or the Inspectors?—I think the Inspectors give themselves a great deal of work more than they need to do.

111. You do not think they are overpaid?—Certainly not overpaid; but, from mistaken notions as to their duties, they give themselves a great amount of unnecessary trouble.

112. Can you say whether the number of Inspectors might be reduced?—I cannot say.

113. *The Chairman.*] Do you think that, if the teacher had a smaller salary, considering the cost of living, it is not possible—even with this smaller salary—to place him in as good a position as he occupied some nine or ten years ago?—Yes.

114. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Admitting that there is no waste in the expenditure of the Otago Education Board, you do not go the length of saying that there is no room for economy?—No; I do not.

115. Do you think the teachers would resist the lowering of their salaries?—I think they rather expect some alteration.

116. Would it be going too far to say that they would entertain a feeling of acquiescence?—I do not think that, but I do not think there would be any rebellion. The fact is that I can form no reliable opinion on that subject; the only means I have of forming such an opinion is by reading the reports of their meetings.

117. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Are you aware that the bulk of the teachers receive less than £200 a year, and none more than £500?—I am aware of the fact that out of five hundred teachers in the Otago Education District only thirty receive over £200 a year.

118. Does that include bonuses?—No.

119. Do you know whether teachers in New Zealand are paid higher salaries, relatively, than the other colonies?—No.

120. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Do I understand you that you have no means of making a comparison?—I have not.

121. Nor any means of comparison with the salaries of teachers in England and Scotland?—No; I have not.

122. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Have you found any difficulty in getting certificated teachers?—Not as a rule; there has been difficulty occasionally in outlying places.

123. But taking the schools all round you have had no difficulty in getting certificated teachers?—No.

124. As a matter of fact the supply is plentiful?—Yes. Perhaps the Committee would allow me to make a remark as to the way in which the teachers are paid. There are two ways in which they are paid: one is according to the avera e attendance at the school, the other is by means of bonus. The word "bonus" is a most unhappy one to use, for it suggests that this is something like a gift or present to the teacher, and forms no part of his regular salary. That is a mistaken idea. The "bonus" is simply a moiety of his salary, the amount being divided—one part is given according to average attendance, and the other according to merit and seniority. I think it would be disastrous if the "bonus" were taken away. The word is an unfortunate one, and ought never to have been used in the way it has been used with reference to payment of teachers. It is really the means provided for securing the culture and intellegence of the teacher-class. If you reduce the teacher to a mere craftsman, who will teach children A B C and other lessons as if by rote, you can do so, but you will then have a very inferior educational system. But if the teachers are to be of any real value in educating the children of the community, it appears to me that such consideration justifies the method of payment adopted by the Otago and some other Boards. But I would do away with the word "bonus" altogether.

125. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Are most of your headmasters provided with residences?—I think all our headmasters are provided with residences.

126. *Mr. Allen.*] When you mentioned the amount of salary paid to teachers, did you include bonus?—No; I did not.

127. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] And you did not include the consideration of the teacher having a free house?—No.

Witness: With regard to question 4, I would simply say that the number of pass examinations should be reduced. My reason for this is that I think it would be a wise thing to do away with written examinations; let them be confined to writing itself and arithmetic, which require you to have written questions; if you like, the pass examination might include drawing. Knowledge of other subjects can be very well tested by class examination. That is the way in which most men of ripe years have been educated. How many are there who have any experience of the benefit to be derived from written examination? But some of these class subjects ought to receive very much more attention than they do. Some months ago the Otago Board adopted the plan of sending a circular to the teachers, in which they were directed to give special attention, not to pass subjects only, but to the efficiency of the school in class subjects and the additional subjects, such as singing and some others.

128. *Dr. Fitchett.*] You say that written examinations should be abolished: is it not a fact that the primary schools have a great advantage over the secondary schools in having been subjected to written examination?—I do not know whether that is the case; but, even if it were, I do not think it is an advantage.

129. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] In rating subjects according to their value, would you place drawing before history or geography?—That would depend on the teacher; it is altogether dependent on the capacity for teaching and the enthusiasm of the teacher, and the liking the pupil has for the subject.

130. Apart from the capacity of a particular teacher, assuming that they were all of equal capability, and having regard to the particular value of special subjects to the child, suppose you had to drop out four subjects from the Syllabus, what subjects would you drop out?—It depends on the way you wish to train the child, whether he is to use his head or his hands in his future occupations. If he will have to use his head, the training of his hands will be of secondary importance. It depends entirely upon the aim you set before you. If you aim at developing his mental powers, there is no comparison between history, geography, and drawing. I do not mean, of course, as those subjects are commonly taught. But they are all instruments of mental training undoubtedly.

131. Do you not think that the two ought not to be separated, but that a part of the school time ought to be given to each?—Certainly; you cannot reasonably put them in antagonism.

132. *Mr. Allen.*] But do you not think that it is important to train the eyes as well as the mental faculties?—Most certainly. I hope that nothing I have said will convey a contrary impression to the minds of the Committee. As a part of school training drawing possesses decided advantages.

133. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackeazie.*] Would you say that it improved the memory?—It is an aid undoubtedly in giving a vivid image of form; but I would not place it on the same level as other subjects in training the mental powers.

134. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] But as a means towards a child obtaining its living in after life, would you not say that geometrical and technical drawing possessed great advantages?—Undoubtedly; but, coming back to geography, it appears to me that nothing could be more absurd than the method adopted of teaching geography in schools. The text-books first set children to learn that the earth is a globe; next they deal with the motions and size of the earth, then with latitude and longitude—most abstruse branches of the subject; and then they give the children a lot of names of places to learn, instead of calling attention to the natural features of the child's neighbourhood and working from that. By the present absurd mode of teaching the subject loses the greater part of its value.

135. *Mr. Allen.*] Do you think that grammar has any very great value? No, certainly not: it is one of the last subjects that the child, when he becomes a man, comprehends. But a child can be taught as much grammar as he is likely to derive benefit from without being taught formal grammar; that is, by good example in the manner of speaking, by a judicious course of reading, and by explanation, the more elementary parts of grammar can be taught. But looking to grammar as a scientific exposition of language that can only be undertaken by advanced pupils or grown-up men.

136. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Do you not think that the process of analysis is of advantage?—I do: it is the rational way of teaching the subject.

137. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Are you aware of the importance which the Scotch system gave to grammar?—Yes; I have suffered from it.

138. In connection with the breaking-down of children going to school young, were you speaking rather in your capacity as a medical man?—I stated that their energy would be better utilised in improving their physical health.

139. Do you not think the two things might go on simultaneously: have you the means of knowing that the break-down was not attributable to some other cause not within your knowledge?—I did not say anything about children breaking down under seven; the cases of breaking down I referred to were not children under seven.

140. Then, as regards children over seven years of age, have you the means of knowing that the break-down may not be attributable to causes other than study at school?—Yes. When a medical man goes to attend a patient he makes inquiry as to every possible cause which may have led up to the illness. If the patient is well nourished, and there is no ill-treatment, and all the surrounding circumstances are favourable to good health, without any other predisposing cause to account for it, he must look elsewhere. I have known cases where the persons whom I was called to see were in the best possible circumstances—well housed and well cared for physically—and the sole cause of the break-down was the anxiety and worry consequent on school-work.

141. Apparently?—Undoubtedly. I have one or two cases at present where no other cause can be assigned.

142. *Mr. Barron.*] Perhaps Dr. Brown, in preparing his notes on the Syllabus, would give us also the benefit of all the information he possesses bearing upon the health of children attending school, as well as upon the economy of the system?—There is one point which I wish to place before the Committee in estimating the effect of this over-pressure. It is a great mistake to think that the whole of the damage done to children is exhibited in the cases of those who have to be taken or kept away from school. Short of absolute ill-health, there is a great deal of minor misery caused to children which they do not exhibit during their school-life: the lessened capacity for the enjoyment of life, the twist given to the mental energies, and a great number of other things have to be taken into consideration in estimating the effects of the Syllabus and the tendencies of the system.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

Mr. A. D. Riley, Director of the School of Design, in attendance and examined.

143. *The Chairman.*] Will you state your position in connection with the subject of the education given in public schools?—My position is that of Art Director to the Wellington Education Board. That includes the direction of the school of design and the supervision of drawing in the public schools of this district. The work I have principally in hand in connection with the public schools is the training of teachers in the course of instruction to be adopted, and seeing that instruction carried out by the teachers in the public schools in accordance with the recommendations made. My first act was to issue a Syllabus to the teachers, giving them a brief and general idea of the manner in which drawing should be conducted in the schools. That document has been printed by the Government, and issued to the Education Boards of the various districts, this being a copy which I hand to the Chairman. [Evidence put in.] I might state that, although it has been issued to the various Boards, it is only adhered to, I believe, in the Wellington District, though other Boards have ordered through me sets of apparatus in accordance with the Syllabus I issued. It contains all that I consider necessary for the public-school work. My experience of the teaching of drawing in the public schools is that the drawing is more of a copying character than drawing, properly understood, should be. It was not regarded as the expression of the idea of form so much as the mere copying of a given sketch. I introduced the following separate sections: (1) Dictation-drawing; (2) memory-drawing; (3) cutting-out lessons. This I found to be the best method of giving instruction in the lower standards. Copies have to be drawn for the upper standards upon the black board, the whole class drawing from the same copy, thus compelling the children to judge of proportion, construction, &c. They are unable to take exact measurements as in the case of a copy beside them. One explanation from the teacher serves for the whole class, and this allows much more time for supervision of the work done. The Government books, Standards I. and II., do not give the children the faculty of drawing, but merely an imitative faculty. In Standards IV., V., and VI. I give them the object to draw from. I find now that drawing in the schools has considerably improved in the lower standards. I would like the members of the Committee to visit a school and see exactly the nature of the instruction given. That would be much better than talking at any great length about it. You would then be able to see the results of the system now adopted. In connection with my duties in giving instruction to the schools I found that the time devoted to drawing was very short, and applied for an extension; but it has been found impossible, in view of the work of the standards, to be carried on. In the lower standards the time is so taken up with other subjects that at most we can only get one hour a week for drawing. This is very unfortunate, for it prevents sufficient instruction being given when it would be most effective. In the Report of the Royal Commissioners on Technical Education, 1884, it was recommended that "elementary drawing be incorporated with writing as a single elementary subject, and that instruction in drawing be continued throughout the standard." That a school shall not be deemed to be provided with proper "apparatus of elementary instruction" unless it have a proper supply of casts and models for drawing. This we have not got, but I have endeavoured to obviate this want in the district by applying a vote of £100, given by the Board of Education, to the purchase of wire-models, so that the child might see and understand the vanishing of lines from the objects they have before them. Suppose a solid model is used, it is hard for a child to understand why lines of a figure are foreshortened, knowing, for instance, that the faces of a cube are all the same size. These wire-models are also used to illustrate lines, angles, diameters, diagonals, and simple figures, the drawing being done upon plain (unruled) slates. A series of elementary casts are also provided, so that outline may be taught from the object; the pupils can then see the relief of the object, and endeavour to express it from the various points of view. I do not see how drawing can be efficiently taught unless these models are supplied. The examination of the schools is conducted in the following manner with reference to various grades: First grade, for public schools, consisting of elementary freehand, model, scale and geometrical drawing. Certificates are issued for each section as passed, and a full certificate upon completion of the whole. [Examples of papers worked by the children, together with sectional and full certificates, handed in.] Children not connected with any public school may sit for this examination upon payment of a registration fee of 1s. for each section taken. Second grade, for teachers of public schools (teachers and scholars of private schools, upon payment of 2s. 6d. per section), students of schools of design. Sections: Freehand, model, geometrical (plain and solid), perspective, with black-board practice from memory for teachers. [Worked examples handed in.] Third grade, for students of schools of design, consisting of a two-years' course in drawing in outlines and light and shade from the cast, and group of models, and a two-years' course in geometrical and perspective drawing. Special certificates in accordance with school of design syllabus are issued for special sections. All advanced works, and works for art-class teachers' certificate are examined by the South Kensington authorities, with whom arrangements have been made. [*Note.*—The above certificates are in accordance with South Kensington requirements.] I have endeavoured as much as possible to make the course thorough from beginning to end, so that the child going to the public school commences with the simplest elements, and makes steady progress from that stage until he goes to the second scale, and thence to the school of design. There is one important point in respect to which I am persuaded, if attention were given to the matter, it would result beneficially. That is in regard to the present examination of teachers by the Education Department—teachers who pass in the majority of subjects, but fail in drawing. I think

they should not be considered as absolutely passing, but that some modification of the certificate should be adopted, or the certificate withheld, as in New South Wales, until their drawing came up to the standard required by the department. At present, when a teacher gets through, although he may have failed in drawing, he holds the full certificate without having done the necessary work on this subject. So long as the teachers find comparative failure in drawing does not affect the general result, they will give it the least attention, and hence indifferent results must follow. I do not think I can say anything more with reference to public-school work. The next portion of my work is in connection with the school of design. One of the conditions under which I came to New Zealand was that I should establish a school of design, and that technical classes should be commenced. The technical classes were commenced in April last year, with 32 students. The total number of students now in attendance at the Central School is 124; at the Newtown-branch School, 32; at Masterton, 13—making 169 in all. There are 126 teacher students in attendance. The usefulness of the schools may be ascertained from the following facts: There are 52 trade students, that is to say, young men connected with the various trades in the city; there are 55 general students, a large number of whom will devote their knowledge to some useful purpose at a later time, but are at present undecided as to their future course. It is intended to issue a circular to the trades in Wellington, urging them to encourage attendance at the various classes. [Copy handed in.] We are at present working under very serious difficulties from the fact that we have very little accommodation, and, unless we can provide funds within a reasonable date, it will, I am afraid, be necessary to close the school. The best possible way of giving the Committee an idea of the nature of the work would be for the members to visit the school if they could find it convenient to do so. I should be glad to meet them there at any time, and to show them the nature of the whole work, and how it is carried on.

144. Have you any recommendation to make?—The first and most important recommendation that I would mention now is the establishment of a science and art department. I think a department on the same principle as the South Kensington Institution should be established.

145. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] Do you mean the establishment of a department by the Government?—With the aid of the Government. Now the whole thing is split up. There are art schools in other districts; but not technical schools. Such a department would be a very great help. It ought to be done at a reasonable cost. The school here has no funds. The Board of Education pay for our gas and advertising. Upon that the whole school is working. I think it is only reasonable to expect that schools could be established in other districts on the same basis with as little expense. Instructors could be appointed to such schools with power to direct the drawing in the schools of that district. I should consider that any one appointed to organize this department of art should have the duty cast upon him of supervising the instruction given in the public schools, so that the entire system of work should be the same throughout. This I consider important, as upon the thorough teaching of this subject in public schools depends to a considerable extent the success of future workmen. At the present time little drawing is done in some districts. Although directions for instruction have been issued by the department, this instruction has not been carried out as it should be. The basis is wrong in the lower standards; in this sense, that the mind, the eye, and the hand are not trained sufficiently together; it is more a question of how accurate the copy can be made, than training the eye to see, the memory to retain the impression made, and the hand to convey that impression to paper. The system is not understood by the teachers, and the teaching is therefore not what it should be—that is to say, half of its value is lost. I am afraid that I could not, without seriously considering the whole matter, give you a detailed idea of the nature of this art department. If it is the wish of the Committee I could call the instructors together, and give the Committee a full report at a later date. We should be able to give all possible information as to the method of conducting such a department at the least possible cost. There is one more important point that I would urge on the attention of the Committee. It is this: that, if drawing were efficiently taught in all the public schools, its appreciation would be greater than it now is as an aid to the performance of the necessary work which the pupils will have to do through their future life. As matters are now, it is hard in many cases to make the scholars see the necessity for drawing in connection with their future trades and professions. That is one of the greatest difficulties we have to contend with. If drawing were taught thoroughly in schools, it would lead up to professional studies, and students would have a better idea than they can have now of the necessity of carrying on the study of drawing after leaving the public school for the sake of the benefit it will be in the practice of their different trades and professions.

146. *The Chairman.*] You do not say much about your evening classes?—You have a return before you of the number of students attending the classes, and the fees paid on the lower scale, which is equal to about 5½d. a lesson of two hours. The fee for the lesson in the engineering and architectural class is rather higher, being about 10½d. for a two hours' lesson. These classes meet on two evenings a week, and are instructed by professional men. But I should say that classes are held in the school every evening in the week. These trade students, through the knowledge they have obtained in the school, have derived very great benefit in various ways. As an instance of the great value of one of the classes—that of mechanical drawing and engineering—a young fellow in this class, sixteen years of age, had received instructions upon the drawing of a cog-wheel. The instruction was not confined to the drawing only, but the student was taught to construct the object represented, and to apply his knowledge to practical results: so that you see this drawing was not simply a matter of representing the object upon paper; he was able to go to the workshop and there construct it. Another student has manufactured an engine upon a small scale, which I think would be a credit to any one. If the members of the Committee would be pleased to visit the school I could show them models made by the students as results of the knowledge gained there. Attached to the school we have a workshop, if we desire to use it, so that any student might at once proceed there and carry into practical effect the knowledge he has gained from

instruction. My objection to the ordinary drawing classes established is simply this: that one person undertakes, together with the general classes, to teach architectural and mechanical drawing, but there is no attempt to carry the instruction further towards practical results. I should myself be unable to give the practical instruction for the constructive work in these sections as effectively as a professional man. For this reason I have appointed specialists to undertake these sections. In every case in these technical classes the ground-work is made as thorough as possible. It is hoped eventually to establish a proper architectural and engineering school in connection with the school of design. Really, we are doing more than the work required to be done by us as a school of design. We are carrying out a work of great practical utility; our aim is so to carry on the work of the school that it shall be thoroughly technical in all its details and facts. There is another special section to which I would also invite your attention—namely, the modelling class. In this class we propose to utilise the work of the students. We are already arranging to do so. With a view to the establishment of *terra-cotta* work, they are now learning modelling, and I hope their knowledge will be practically utilised very shortly. Arrangements are being made for carrying on this work, and a kiln is being built by a private firm.

147. You said there was a return sent in of the number of students in the evening classes: in this return which I hold in my hand the classes are not evening classes?—Yes, there are evening classes there as well as day classes.

148. Do you find that tradesmen take advantage of those classes?—Not sufficiently. One or two tradesmen, I am afraid, are anxious about their own standing; they are afraid the students will get too much knowledge. Tradesmen, in two instances, refuse to recommend students to attend. I think if a small sum could be given to each district to enable it to provide an instructor it would be of great advantage to the district, for there are several districts without any such instructor. But at the same time I think the whole system should be properly organized, and each district should be dealt with from a central department. If each instructor were allowed to organize his own school-work there is a probability that the system would not be so efficient as it should be.

149. Are there no other schools of design except this one in the colony?—Yes; there is one in Dunedin and one in Christchurch.

150. *Mr. Allen.*] Speaking of evening classes, have you had experience of evening classes in England?—Yes, I attended the Lambeth School of Design and the South Kensington School.

151. But, as a matter of fact, do you know from experience that the technical evening classes there are likely to be a success?—The technical evening drawing classes are certain to be a decided success. They have proved themselves to be so already, except in places where instruction is deficient, or from other cause the work cannot go on. There are evening classes throughout England in almost every place where there is a population of 25,000 people. I think there is no doubt whatever they have been successfully established.

152, Are the numbers attending increasing or decreasing?—The numbers are increasing decidedly. Greater stress has been laid upon them in late years. The trades already find that unless they get this technical instruction, and consequently knowledge, they cannot compete with the work at present turned out by other countries. I may instance the French and German schools, where they devote as a rule four hours a week to drawing in the public schools.

153. In the evening?—In the day; and after leaving the public schools they continue their course. But there is an important point to be observed, and that is, that usually to artisans no fees are charged in these continental schools. This matter of the payment of fees is a great difficulty with us here. Young lads find it sometimes impossible to pay fees, although the fees are so very low. In such cases I pay the fee, and they refund as they can.

154. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] What do you mean when you say a very reasonable cost in connection with the establishment of such a department?—If a sum of £1,000 were set aside for the establishment of an art department, that would be sufficient for the present. The first thing that will have to be done is to get some person to organize the whole scheme. That will have to be done before anything else is done. The money would be mainly expended in organizing schools in districts where no schools have been organized up to the present time. It is a fact now thoroughly understood that, if trades are to be successfully carried on, drawing must be thoroughly taught. Great stress is laid upon this matter of organization at Home. It is the weakest part of the English system but the strongest part in the German and continental systems generally. The reason of the great efficiency of their workmen is now recognised to be the higher value which they set upon technical instruction as applicable to trade. Any person who has had to deal with such a department would not, I think, have very great difficulty in organizing a complete scheme for the purposes of the colony. After that, with reference to the school of design, I think it should be devoted almost wholly to the technical classes.

155. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Do you suggest a technical system, to be supported entirely at the cost of the State?—No. Once the schools were established fees might be charged for instruction. At present the Board of Education in this district find a room for the training of the teachers, and this we use as the school of design. I think fees would be sufficient, with a small salary added, where the school is a success, to cover the whole of the cost. Mr. Habens and myself have had conversation upon this subject, and he fully agrees with me that such a department would be beneficial to the colony. The great difficulty is that of getting the necessary funds.

156. But do I understand you correctly that you are clearly of opinion that the pupils should pay fees?—Decidedly; but the fees would not be sufficient to pay the instructors. We have the same system in New South Wales. Technical art-classes were established there in connection with the Technical Education Board. In that case the fees are paid to the Board. The Board refunds the whole of the fees and give salary in addition, ranging from £100 to £500 to the instructors.

157. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] You say that tradesmen have withheld encouragement from your technical class?—In one or two instances that is so; but I think the majority of the tradesmen appreciate the necessity that exists for such instruction. But the great difficulty is to persuade the lads that it is a benefit to them.

158. *Mr. Allen.*] Do I understand you that you would form your art school on the basis of the South Kensington establishment? In what way? Do you mean as a school of design?—Yes; I would advise the establishment of a school of design in each large district, but would make the instruction branches rather more technical in character.

159. Do you consider the South Kensington establishment a technical school?—I do not; it has no practical working out of the instruction given—no way of carrying knowledge into practice. It is, strictly speaking, a training school; but, from experience, I should say that those students trained as designers find they have not considered the nature of the material or substance to be worked in connection with their designs, and consequently find their knowledge far less practical than it should be. In the Sydney College we have a practical application of the drawing done; that is what I am striving to do here.

160. *The Chairman.*] In New South Wales is there any part of the system set apart for music—that is, is there any connection of music with the department?—No. There was a musical class at the time I left, but I see by the report it has been discontinued.

161. You spoke of science?—Yes; there is a scientific provision, a laboratory, &c. But, on this point, I could give you better information by submitting for your attention the report on the Education Department of New South Wales, page 167.

162. Have you a copy?—Yes; I have a copy which I can forward to you. In every case drawing is considered the basis of trade and professional instruction. A lad is expected to go through a drawing course before he proceeds to the separate divisions. Students are unable to obtain the certificates as experts unless they go through this course.

163. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] So that we may apply it to your evidence, will you give us some explanation of what you mean by the word "technical?"—I consider that "technical," in our sense, means a thorough knowledge not only of the practical part of a work, but of the theoretical part also.

164. What work?—Any trade or professional work; we will say a builder. The technical knowledge of his work would be that he should understand not only how the bricks are put together, but how all the parts of a building are constructed. He should know everything connected with excavation, for instance; be able to take out quantities, and to know what the quantities of any given work should be. He should be thoroughly capable of judging of the nature of the materials, and the character of the work when it is completed. It really means that he has not only a practical experience of all that has to be done, but a theoretical knowledge of everything necessary to the completion of his work. In a word, that he should have a thorough knowledge of everything requisite from the beginning to the end. This is why I say these evening classes of ours are technical—that we not only give theoretical knowledge, but that we combine that knowledge with practice, so that the pupil may understand thoroughly the nature of the work he has on hand.

165. *Dr. Fitchett.*] You say that, to initiate this system, if £1,000 were set aside for it, that would be sufficient?—I think so, for the first year.

166. Do you think that would enable the State schools in the various parts of the colony to have the necessary accommodation and apparatus?—No. I think it would be necessary during the first year that a person should visit the various districts and see what has been done in each, and what could be done to improve the position of each separate district. He would report what has been done, and make recommendations as to what should be further done, so that the classes might be established in all the districts.

167. So that £1,000 would be available, not for apparatus, but for making the preliminary inquiries?—For that purpose only; it would not be sufficient to provide apparatus.

168. Would you be good enough to say how much would be necessary to get the requisite apparatus in the schools?—I could give you an idea if I ascertained the number of schools. There are, I believe, nineteen districts.

The Chairman.] Perhaps it would be more convenient to forward that estimate with the reports and other documents which you say you will forward to the Committee.

169. *Dr. Fitchett.*] Have you any knowledge of the State schools?—I visit a large number of schools during the year, and have an opportunity when there of observing the methods adopted in teaching. I may state that my own conviction, as an outsider, in regard to that matter is this: that the average teacher is incapable of keeping up with the standard requirements. By this, I do not mean that the teachers are incapable or have not the knowledge, but that they have a certain amount of matter to get through in the year, and their difficulty is in getting through that amount of work, more especially in Standard III. I feel strongly that the system is one of "cram" in many of the subjects, so as to get the school up to the Inspector's requirements. From my point of view, the mind of the child is not sufficiently exercised; everything is told to him; he is not made to think sufficiently for himself; the perceptive faculties are not trained. This, I conclude, is on account of the difficulty the teacher finds in getting the requisite amount of work done. He has no time to draw out the intelligence.

170. In order to find time for drawing in the State schools it would be necessary to simplify the syllabus, would it not?—Yes.

171. Will you give the Committee an idea as to how you would simplify the Syllabus: what subjects would you let go?—From my point of view, I would let go some grammar, some geography, and a part of history lessons. From my point of view, some of the history and geography lessons now given might just as well be given in reading lessons. Some of the geography lessons, I feel

quite sure, have not the least effect. I was in a school the other day where the teacher was cramming the children with a lot of names of small rivers and places of a foreign country. The teacher said to me himself that he had no idea where two of these places were previous to the lesson. He said he would devote the time to drawing if he were permitted to do so. But he further said that he must bring the school up to standard requirements. In fact, the teachers are afraid if they do not bring the children up to standard requirements their position will be damaged. When you ask them to give time for drawing they say it is impossible; that the work necessary for the standard requirements must be done.

172. How many hours in each day do you think should be available for the system you suggest?—I think that in the first three standards there should be not less than two hours' work per week. In the continental schools it is more. In France, four hours. In these younger classes there should be more thorough ground-work done than there is. Hitherto it has been too elaborate. They have not been used to commence with simple straight lines. There is another thing I have observed in the majority of the schools, the pupil is not made to understand thoroughly what he is doing. When he comes to a straight line he draws a level line upon his slate, and repeats after the teacher, "a horizontal line is a level line;" but there is no application of it to existing objects so as to impart a complete understanding of it. Drawing, if thoroughly taught, brings with it a great many other advantages. I think if the nature of drawing were fully understood, it would be found that the memory would be more retentive, the eyes would see more than they do at present; that, with the advantages it gives, culture would be better in every respect. It makes children more observant, more practical, and better fitted for their other studies.

173. You think it is better than "cramming" them with geography?—Yes, for this reason: that when they go forth into the world they would have something practical to rely on. They do not, I think, require quite so much parsing, so long as they can compose a decent letter, get a knowledge of arithmetic, and are able to read and write well.

174. But supposing that, under any circumstances, there can be only a certain period of time available for the instruction given each day, how would you dispose of the time so as to bring your subject within the day's work?—I consider writing and drawing should be ranked as equal. I think these two last subjects might be very well taught together, for drawing improves the handwriting: it is the freedom of hand obtained in drawing that helps the handwriting.

175. What I mean is: how would you place your technical subjects, in what order of preference, so as to enable you to give the instruction in State schools? With reference to the time or the Syllabus? You would have only three or four hours for the whole work of the school?—In accordance with the standards so I would regulate the entire work; in the first place, the teacher should teach the infant merely to observe facts correctly, so that the child may know a figure when he sees it. The First-Standard children are taught the application of lines and angles—that is, the application of lines to surrounding objects, so that the children may be able to say, "This is a horizontal line," or "This is an oblong." They have to apply their knowledge practically by drawing them from the objects on their slates. The older system was to teach by ruled lines; but, from my experience of infant life and infant classes, I should give up ruled lines. They are not necessary. I can give instances to prove it. My objection to First and Second Standard drawing-books issued to schools under the new regulations is that they do not train the child to draw. After having gone through the two standards, give the class plain slates, and you will find three-fourths cannot draw a square correctly, and could give you no definition or correct understanding of the same. Further, they are decidedly injurious to the eyes, and I strongly urge that they be discontinued.

176. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] You may take the children to other schools where they cannot get on without ruled lines?—Just so: it depends on the teacher, but if the teacher understands the work ruled lines will not be necessary. In the First Standard I give a dictation-lesson, selecting some applicable piece of ornament, such as a square and a cross in it. But in the infant classes they should begin with the straight lines; I lay special stress upon this as forming the ground-work of all drawing. In the First Standard the teacher gives an accurate description of the object which initiates a careful attention on the part of the pupil, who is then required to illustrate the words of the teacher. In the next lesson they are called upon to draw the object from memory. They are then required, for a home lesson, to draw the object from memory 5in. or 6in. in size and cut the figure out in either cardboard or paper. That is an outline of the First Standard work. In proceeding to the Second Standard they are tested on the work of the First Standard. Then the circle is given within a square, showing quadrant, semicircle, circle, diameter, radius, &c., and illustrated by wire-models. Then exercises in straight and curved lines combined. Dictation, memory, cutting out, and black-board work continued. The Third Standard is an extension of this. The Fourth includes model-drawing as before—applying their knowledge to objects. They are called upon to analyse the forms placed before them. For instance, as I have already told the Committee, I have introduced a system of wire-models, so as to induce them to understand fully the nature of the object placed before them. It is difficult for a child to look at some objects—say the solid cube for example—and to understand why it is that, in drawing, certain of the lines slope down. The appearance of objects has to be very clearly explained to children. I find that these wire-models can be understood. I have found this system very effective; it affords promise of great success in carrying the instruction through the standards. In the Fifth and Six Standards scale and plain, and solid geometrical drawing is taught. To the solid geometry I attach great importance. The geometrical books by D. Blair, issued by the department, are excellent works and thoroughly suited to class-work. I should say that the regulations I have issued to the teachers are not strictly in accordance with the regulations issued by the department; but we get through the same amount of work, although we place it in a different order. I think that after a lad has passed through this course and leaves the school, when he goes to a trade he has ground-work laid that will benefit him very much in the work he has to do, and he will be fitted then to pass to the technical school

proper: at present we have to give the simplest possible instruction to students; this should decidedly be given in the public schools.

177. You have not mentioned workshops?—I would have workshops attached to the school of design. The only plan we can adopt under present circumstances is to utilise the shops that are in existence in the town. We have managed to do this in one case—the engineering classes. We can send students there that they may carry out the practical part of their work.

178. Do I understand you to suggest that your school of design and technical institute should stand apart—that is, be separate from, or that it should form part of, the State schools?—I think it would be better to place these schools directly under the department. The school of design should be central in each district. You might have a local Committee to take the business portion of the work, or supervise generally, but not to interfere with the instruction. It appears to me that the organization and the inspection of the schools should come from the Education Art Department.

179. You must see that would form a radical change in our public-school system, for the Education Act is mandatory that no fees shall be paid, and you have said that they should be paid?—Otherwise I do not see how the institutions could be supported. It would be better, of course, if we could carry on as the French and German schools do, where generally no artisan fees are paid. In every case, I believe, under the continental system the artisan is free after passing certain stages.

180. As this forms a large and very important part of education, do you not think it would be better taught if the necessary instruction were imparted under a separate system?—Principally it would be, under the science department; my suggestion is that a science and art department should be formed for the purpose of controlling it.

181. This would add a costly department to our education system. According to your evidence there is a difficulty in connection with the question of fees: you say you think that fees should be paid. I think with you that fees ought to be paid. But then comes in a conflict with the Education Act. Do you not think it would be better to adopt the New South Wales and Victoria plan, and to have the school of design and technical institute separate? Take, for example, the Colony of Victoria, with, roundly speaking, a population of a million, having thirty-eight schools of design or technicalogical institutions, as they call them, the amount of aid given by the State being, roughly stated, about £900, the remainder of the cost being provided by the pupils in the form of fees. Now, the question I wish to put to you is, whether you think it the better plan to make your technical institute or school of design form a part of general education, or in the interest of art and technical instruction to have a separate system? Would it not be so?—Establishing a science and art department would make it a separate system.

182. But I understand you to say that you would have it separate. I want you to be clear, and tell us Yes or No whether you would have it form a part of our education system, or whether you would have it separate. If you have not thought that out I would wish you to think it out?—I would keep it separate decidedly.

183. You are clear on that?—Yes.

184. *Mr. Allen.*] Would you tell us, when considering the whole subject, whether science should form a part of your proposal?—I would leave that to the scientist. I prefer to speak of those subjects I am acquainted with.

185. *Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie.*] I should like to ask you whether you find any considerable number of children with an inaptitude for drawing?—No. I am aware that some of the teachers of the Board of Education in this district are under the impression that it is necessary to have talent for drawing. To that I say emphatically that such a notion is utterly wrong. There is nothing that should prevent any child, supposing him to be possessed of the ordinary senses, from learning to draw. I have had a very extensive experience in New South Wales, having had the examination of teachers under my direction, and the revision of over 2,500 papers each examination. I do not think I have found more than three children who were unable to learn to draw; the reason that these three could not draw was in consequence of physical defects. If you commence at the right age there is no child that cannot learn to draw. This point has been raised by one member of the Board, who has said that children who have not the necessary talent should not be compelled to learn, as he thinks it is only fitted for those who will require it for the work they have to do in after life. I have no hesitation in saying that such an opinion is a great mistake.

186. Would you be disposed to hold the same doctrine in regard to music?—I have already said that I would prefer not to speak of subjects with which I am not so well acquainted. I do not see why a child should not be taught music the same as drawing. But I am perfectly certain that drawing can be taught to every child. I can only say again that I could wish the Committee would visit the school and see the actual work done. They could see the children at work. That would be by far the best proof they could have of the efficiency of the system of instruction which I suggest.

(For Report in continuation *vide* page 57.)

EDUCATION GENERALLY.

(Continued from page 12.)

STATEMENT made by Mr. HABENS at the request of the Committee.

SEVERAL questions have been put to me by or through the Chairman of the Committee, some in writing and some by word of mouth, with respect to proposed or possible reductions of the cost of education. The most general of them is as follows: "Is the present system as economical and efficient as it could be made, or could any alteration be made which would not impair the system and yet save money?" More specific questions are in this form: "Supposing that it is necessary to reduce the cost by £50,000 a year or by £100,000 a year, how could the reduction be effected with least injury to the system?" I have also been asked, what effect upon the system would be

produced by requiring the parents to pay fees for the children in the higher standards, and what effect by permitting the Committees to receive money contributions to keep up schools. I group these questions together, because they all relate to the cost of the system, and appear to indicate a desire not to interfere with the system.

The easiest question to answer is the last. "The Education Act, 1877," reckons as part of "The Board Fund" "moneys which the Board may receive from donations, subscriptions, or otherwise" (section 42); and as part of "The School Fund" "donations, subscriptions, &c. (section 80). In the annual report of the Minister of Education a statement is made every year of the income of the Boards from all sources. In the last report (p. ix.) is a statement for the year 1886. The "local receipts" of the Boards amounted to £2,438 13s. 11d. Page 5 of the Appendix gives the whole income, and specifies the amount received from local sources for each of the nine years from 1877 to 1885. In the same report it is stated (page xi.) that the Committees received at least £4,500 from sources independent of the Boards, and the data (which are unfortunately incomplete) are given on p. 6 (Table No. 6) of the Appendix. Similar information will be found in the reports for the three years immediately preceding. The effect of such local contributions is to add to the income of the Boards and the Committees, and not to reduce the capitation allowance. I have no means of estimating the degree in which the disposition to make voluntary contributions towards the maintenance of schools would be stimulated by a reduction of the statutory capitation allowance from the Government. It appears to me, however, that the character of the system would be materially altered by throwing any considerable part of the cost upon voluntary contributors.

I think, too, that the character of the system would be altered by imposing fees for the Fifth and Sixth Standards. The Education Act provides for the institution of district high schools, in which "all the branches of a liberal education, comprising Latin and Greek classics, French, and other modern languages, mathematics, and such other branches of science as the advancement of the colony and the increase of the population may from time to time require, may be taught;" and it is enacted that "for such higher education fees shall be paid." But in section 84, which prescribes a course of primary instruction, in which none of the subjects before named as being subjects of higher education or branches of a liberal education are included, it is expressly enacted that "no fees shall be payable at any public school except as hereinbefore provided in the case of district high schools." The Minister who carried the Bill through the House stated at length the reasons that induced the Government to hold that a system of national primary education ought to be a system without fees. The Bill contained a proposal for payment by the people not of fees, but of a capitation-tax of 10s. upon all children of school-age (between five and fifteen), whether attending school or not. This proposal was rejected by the House, with the result that the whole cost was thrown upon the consolidated revenue; and it is from this point of view that the system is commonly described as free. It might be called "free" if, though the child was received without specific payment, the parent paid a rate as a citizen and householder; but Parliament made it free in a wider sense, by refusing to allow even the levying of a capitation rate. To me, therefore, it appears that to demand fees would be contrary to the principles of the primary-education system of this colony.

As to the effect of the imposition of fees for instruction beyond the Fourth Standard. Upon the financial position of the Boards and upon the remuneration received by the teachers it is easier to speculate than to form an opinion. The number of children above the Fourth Standard is about 12¼ per cent. of the whole number on the rolls. Supposing that the regularity of attendance of these older children is neither better nor worse than that of the younger, there would be a saving to the Treasury of the capitation allowance on about 11,000 children. Of course, at £4 per head, this would be about £44,000, but less if the capitation allowance is reduced. The question now arises, how much of this amount lost to the Boards and to the teachers would be made up by fees? And, before this question can be answered, the answers to two others are necessary. How many of the 11,000 children would attend school if they had to pay for it, and what fees would they have to pay? My opinion is that very few would attend if they had to pay £4 a year each. Perhaps the Boards could obtain a greater revenue by fixing the fee as low as £2. My reasons for thinking that few would attend are these: First, although the Fourth Standard represents a very meagre and rudimentary education, which it has been thought right to secure for the children of the most careless and most thoughtless by means of the "compulsion" clauses, and below which a child under fourteen cannot be sent from an industrial school to service; yet, if the State assumes the position of refusing to go beyond this in supplying free education, many parents will think that anything beyond this is a kind of luxury which it would be a strange extravagance for them to indulge their children in. Second, long experience proves that, when the circumstances of families of the poorer classes become straitened the necessities of the present have first to be considered, and the school career of a fee-paying child having been interrupted for a few weeks or months through the pressure of temporary distress is often not resumed. Third, there are many people who do not take enough interest in the welfare of their children and of the State to send them with ordinary regularity to school when no fees are required, and such people are not likely to send them regularly, if at all, if they have to pay for them as well as send them. I have said that I can only speculate on the probable proportion of the £44,000 that could be received in the form of fees. As a matter of speculation I should put the proportion at considerably less than one-half. It would not be easy to fix the rate of payment. In a school of thirty children, with a master paid at from £120 to £150 a year, the parents could see that the cost for each child was from £4 to £5; but they might argue that the school had to be kept up whether they paid or not, and that, if they paid a fee of only £2, it would be better for the school than if they kept their children away. In a large school, where the average cost was less than £3, it would be hard to convince the parents that they ought to pay £4. I could point to one instance in which the older boys cost more than £4 each, and I do not think the parents would pay a full share in such a case. It is certain that, unless the fees amounted to a total equal to the total now paid as capitation allowance for the same number of children, the Boards would have less money to expend on salaries, and the teachers would suffer the loss.

This brings me to the more general question of the effect of a reduction of £50,000 or £100,000 in the whole expenditure. I take it that the question is meant to apply to expenditure on teaching and administration, and not to the building grants. But the means of erecting necessary buildings must be considered. Hitherto the supply has come from a public-works vote, or (in other words) out of the proceeds of loans. It appears likely that it will not be possible to draw money for this purpose from this source in future, and that therefore—unless some measures are adopted that the questions put to me do not require me to speculate upon—the demand upon the consolidated revenue will be heavier than it has been—heavier, I mean, in proportion to population, and not merely with respect to the amount required. However that may be, I assume that the question is not meant to apply to grants for buildings. In considering what would be the effect of reducing the grants made to Boards for purposes independent of school buildings, it is necessary to notice the cost of each part of the Boards. Last year (as is shown on page ix. of the Minister's report) the expenditure on teachers' salaries and allowances and on the training of teachers was £290,794 15s. 7d. Out of this sum £8,495 16s. 10d. was spent on training, so that the payments to teachers amounted to £282,298 18s. 9d. The incidental expenses of schools are set down at £29,104 5s. 9d.; the office expenses of the Boards at £10,695 0s. 8d.; and inspection (including examination of pupil-teachers) at £10,241 1s. 10d. There is also an expenditure of £5,573 0s. 9d. on scholarships. Apart from the cost of buildings these items practically constitute the whole of the Boards' expenditure. Recapitulating and using round numbers the items are—Teachers, £282,000; training institutions, £8,000; incidental expenses of schools, £29,000; office expenses, £10,500; inspection, £10,000; scholarships, £5,500: total, £346,000. About £17,000 of the total is independent of the capitation allowance (£4,000 towards cost of inspection, £8,000 for normal schools, and £5,000 for scholarships). About £330,000 was the expenditure on objects to which the ordinary capitation is applicable.

I am asked to say what would be the effect of reducing £346,000 to £296,000, or to £246,000, or how any such reduction can be effected with as little injury as possible to the system. I observe that the proposed reductions are reductions of 14⅓ per cent. and 29 per cent. respectively on the present expenditure. Since no part of the expenditure is devoted to objects that are not either necessary or of great importance, the most natural method of reduction appears to be one that would operate *pro ratâ*. I cannot contemplate any such reduction with equanimity. The teachers (whose salaries amount to more than 80 per cent. of the expenditure) are not in the position of the servants of some great firm, who, if a reduction of one-sixth or one-seventh, or a reduction of nearly one-third, is proposed to them, have the option of submitting to it or of seeking employment with another firm. The Government has practically acquired a monopoly of the business of primary instruction, and most of the teachers would be unable to find another employer in the colony, unless they deserted the profession. Some might be able to remove to other colonies and find employment there, but I suppose that the majority would have to submit to the altered conditions. Many of them have been induced to devote their lives to educational pursuits by the prospect of a career and of adequate emolument held out to them by the State, and have depended on the guarantee of stability afforded by parliamentary enactment, and they are not now as well fitted to compete for other employment as they might have been. The shock contemplated in the question would be a very rude one, but probably most of the teachers would rather take reduced pay than be dismissed. Most of the salaries are so small that any reduction would be a serious matter. At the end of last year the number of teachers (as shown in Table M, page viii., of the Report) was 2,894. 281 had salaries of £200 and upwards, 968 had salaries between £100 and £200, and the rest were paid less than £100 a year each.

I have said what effect *pro ratâ* reductions would in my opinion have. I think it is evident that no saving can be made on any of the items that would render it unnecessary to save on the others. The cost of inspection might, perhaps, be reduced by £3,000 if all the inspection were directed from the central department, and if some education districts were amalgamated there might be some saving in the office expenses of the Boards. I have heard it proposed to abolish the Boards, but if they were abolished some one would have to do their work, and competent agents of the central department would have to be posted at local centres and to be assisted by clerks. The normal schools might be continued by the Boards at their own cost if the special grant were withdrawn, but it is more likely that some of them would be abolished, and I think that would be cause for regret. The scholarship grant might be abolished, but not at once, because existing scholarships must be maintained for their whole currency. I think the wiping out of this item would be unpopular. Suppose the cost of maintaining normal schools were thrown on the Boards (£8,000), scholarships abolished (£5,000), inspection centralised at a saving of £3,000, and small districts merged in the larger ones at a saving of £4,000, there would be a saving of £20,000, of which probably not more than £5,000 would be taken from teachers of primary schools. The extra capitation of 4s. (5s. until lately) is, I understand, to be taken off. This amounts to about £17,000 (practically to £21,000, for the whole of the 5s. may be regarded as a present reduction).

Since the Boards are endowed with full discretion as to the distribution of the capitation allowance, they might propose to do something towards meeting the demands of an impoverished condition by closing some of the small schools. The schools with less than 50 children each (containing about 19,000 in all) cost the Boards nearly £30,000 in excess of the capitation allowed for them. Of course if the Boards closed any of these schools the saving to the Boards would be the difference between the cost and the capitation, and this curious result would follow: that the Board would make a small saving by effecting a much larger saving for the Government, for the Government would save the whole capitation on every school that was closed. I will suppose an extreme case. The salary fund is, say, £280,000. The Government resolves to reduce this fund, say, by £30,000. The Boards resolve to maintain the efficiency of their larger schools which on the whole contain nearly between three-quarters or four-fifths of the children. To do this they shut up all the schools with less than 50 children each. By so doing they save £30,000 to balance

the reduction. But at the same time by closing these schools they reduce the Government grant as a whole by £67,000. Therefore the Government, who intended to save £30,000, save £97,000.

The possibilities attendent upon the suppositions I have been asked to discuss are so indefinitely numerous that I trust I may be excused for carrying the investigation to a greater length. The debate of 1877 shows what difficulties stand in the way of a capitation tax such as was then proposed, and difficulties appear to me to attend on every proposal that can be made. I do not think it would be difficult to frame a scheme that would be systematic, perfectly general in its application, automatic in its action, and surely tending towards a reduced rate per head. I drafted such a scheme six or seven years ago, and I will furnish a copy of it if the Committee wishes to have it. The work of framing such a scheme, applicable to the present number of schools and children, would occupy so much time that I cannot ask the Committee to wait for it. I will however proceed to do this work. The outline of the scheme which I drafted in 1881 is as follows: A sum amounting to a capitation of £3 15s. on average attendances is placed in the hands of the department for distribution. 10s. a head is for the incidental expenses of schools, and for Boards' office expenses and inspection, 7s. is applied in the form of bonus according to the classification of the individual teachers, and £2 18s. is distributed according to a scale which allows a certain staff with certain salaries for a school of a certain size. The tendency to a reduced rate depends on the principle that as population increases the average number in each school increases, and a large school can be more economically taught than a smaller one. According to this scheme the £2 18s. per head distributed according to scale (the allowance minus the bonus and the inspection and management of office matters, and incidental expenses of schools) would give £2 a head for schools of about 250 and upwards, about £3 to a school of 100, about £4 to schools between 15 and 35, and £5 or £6 to smaller schools. I am of opinion, however, that the system ought not to be encumbered with the weight of very small schools, which, if they are efficient, must generally be costly. I think that at most the allowance to a school of very small numbers (up to 12 or thereabouts) should be the Government capitation allowance, and that even that should not be granted without sufficient guarantee for the competence of the teacher. I may say that the scale as I drafted it allows one teacher for 35 children, 2 for a school from 36 to 70, 2 and a pupil-teacher for a school of from 71 to 105, and for every 70 beyond that number 1 assistant or 2 pupil-teachers.

ANSWERS to FURTHER QUESTIONS put to Mr. HABENS in writing by the COMMITTEE.

A. Whether he considers the plan of Inspectors constantly inspecting schools in the same district a good one? Would it not be better that Inspectors should, every now and then, change their districts?—I think that an occasional change of Inspectors from one district to another would be useful, and would constitute an improvement.

B. Does he consider School Boards necessary? Would it be safe or reasonable to trust their work to School Committees? Is not the power of a School Board, in case of dismissal of a teacher, too great? What right of appeal has the teacher in case of wrongful dismissal?—I cannot say that I consider the Education Boards necessary, but I think they are very useful, and that the School Committees, as at present constituted, are not competent to do the work now done by the Boards. The Act endeavours to limit the Board's power of dismissal by requiring a previous consulting of the Committee. The Board is less likely to be partial than the local Committee that is in personal relation with the teacher, and therefore the Board is, in my judgment, better fit than the Committee to have the power of dismissal. The only appeal the teacher has against the decision of the Board is an appeal to the law courts. I fear that if there were a right of appeal to the Minister it would be so frequently exercised as to cause great trouble and annoyance with no adequate gain.

C. What is the cost to the State of pupils in secondary schools who could not pass the Sixth Standard in primary schools? What would be the cost of such in the primary schools if kept there till they passed the Sixth Standard?—The data for an answer are wanting. It is possible that the studies of a secondary school may not qualify any one of its pupils to pass the Sixth Standard. I have no means of knowing how many of the secondary-school pupils could pass the Sixth Standard, nor of distinguishing between the cost of pupils in the upper and lower parts respectively of any secondary school.

D. What does he think of the bonus system in regard to teachers in Otago? Does such prevail elsewhere?—I very highly approve of the plan of making a teacher's salary depend partly on the class and grade of his certificate. Otago is not singular in following this plan. North Canterbury, Wanganui, Wellington, and Taranaki Districts act upon it. I do not think the bonus given in Otago is excessive.

E. Does he not think that in Standards III., IV., V., and VI. grammar and composition could be done away with as pass subjects? Does he think too much history and geography taught?—I do not think that the syllabus requires too much grammar, composition, history, or geography. If the Government paid by results I should be willing to allow a lower rate of pay to schools that did less work than the programme contains. But I have always understood that £3 15s. a head was meant to pay for a good sound primary course carried on by efficient teachers. And if teachers are efficient, and inspection is reasonable and wise, I think there ought to be no difficulty in carrying out the programme now prescribed.

F. Does he not think we might with advantage make our system far more technical?—I think that for the present and for some time to come elementary science taught experimentally, taught *con amore* and in the spirit of the standard regulations, and such drawing as the regulations prescribe, constitute the proper amount of technical training for the primary school. Two years ago there was a very instructive paper laid on the table (E.–1D), which showed, I think, how tentative and uncertain all efforts beyond this range are likely to be. I have been greviously disappointed at

the reluctance of the mass of the teachers to take up the so-called "elementary science" in earnest, and I am persuaded that if the Boards and the Inspectors would insist upon an improvement in this respect the result would be most beneficial.

G. Does he not think some simple science subject should be taught, and what science would be the best?—I hold that in every school the modicum of the knowledge of the laws of nature suggested in the syllabus under the (statutory) title of elementary science ought to be imparted with enthusiasm and earnest purpose. To bring the children face to face with the commonest phenomena, and invite them to observe, to think, to question, to infer, and to want explanations of these things, is one of the surest ways to awaken intelligence. I regard the simplest parts of physics and mechanics, and the veriest rudiments of chemistry and physiology, as the most important for primary-school purposes. I do not desire to see these things treated in a scholastic spirit, or any one branch pursued as if learning in that branch were the aim. I want to see them handled in a thoroughly popular way, which need not be unscientific. It is not so much learning that our children want as a mind accustomed to take an interest in things, and seeing occasions of interest on every side. It is very likely that some men would refuse the title of science to such a modicum of intelligible teaching about nature as I have in view; very likely too that if it were called by some such name as "Knowledge of Common Things" some of our teachers who are now far from supposing that they could ever teach science would take heart and make the attempt to become interested in the subject themselves, and to interest their pupils in it.

H. Is sufficient attention paid to subjects contained in clauses 18, 19, and 20 as the additional subjects?—I think I have already indicated my fear that these important parts of the regulations are not sufficiently attended to. But as the Inspectors are not in any way responsible to the department I have not the best means of knowing how the case really stands, and the departmen is wanting in the executive power necessary to the enforcing of a neglected regulation.

I. Does he not think school books should be more uniform in various schools?—I think the Board of a district would do well to limit the range of selection of school books. On the other hand I think the department should not be too narrow in its action in this respect. A monopoly in favour of one set of books would militate against improvements in school literature.

J. Does he think sufficient scholarships are open to boys from primary schools to enable them to pursue their studies at secondary schools and the University?—It is very hard to say what is sufficient when one is dealing with matters of luxury or matters of grace. I am glad there are so many scholarships, and should be glad if there were more. Sometimes they do much good. Very often they are a money prize for a boy whose parents are in no need of the money, and then for all public purposes the money is wasted.

K. Does he think the present training system of teachers a satisfactory and economical one?—It is very difficult to devise an economical method of training teachers, or of carrying on any work of technical education while the population is so scattered. It can scarcely be said that we have a system. There are practically as many systems as there are normal schools, for the four Boards that have such schools have an almost absolute control over them. With many imperfections they have done good service, and are still doing it. But they cannot be cheaply conducted in a country that has no metropolitan concentration of population.

L. Is it not a fact that a great deal of overlapping takes place in the two systems of primary and secondary education: is there any means by which this could be avoided?—To a certain extent I do not object to the overlapping. If the junior part of a secondary school is supported by the fees of the pupils I do not see that any one need find fault. Certainly the interests of the consolidated revenue do not suffer; for it has to find capitation for the boy that is sent to the primary school, whereas it is relieved of all charge for the boy that goes to the high school. The high school does not receive a larger income from its endowments when its numbers grow, therefore additional pupils do not increase the public cost of a school. The effects of overlapping that are most likely to be objected to are two: First, that for reasons of social exclusiveness some parents will not send their children to the primary school, and that the secondary school is lending itself to the perpetuation of class distinctions by providing instruction for such children. An objection on this ground is not likely to be given up merely because it may, perhaps, be shown that the parents are paying fees and that the State is not paying anything for these children. But I do not sympathize with the objection. Secondly, overlapping may be of so marked a character as to render it difficult for a boy who has completed the primary course to find any suitable place in a secondary school, any class fit to carry him on in a higher course. This is a difficulty that the schoolmasters have felt in full force. It has made the organization of their schools more complex than it would have been. But I think they are succeeding in making such arrangements as meet the wants of the transferred pupil; and, further, that the organization of the high schools is undergoing and will undergo a change that will put all this question of overlapping upon a new footing.

Can you ascertain the comparative cost of the smaller schools?—

With respect to the cost of the smaller schools, I have taken out statistics from last quarter's returns of attendance, and have had a rather large correspondence with Boards' Secretaries, to ascertain the present rates of outlay on the maintenance of all schools with average attendance not exceeding 24 each.

The whole number of such schools is 346, and of the children attending at them the number is 5,708, so that the mean number in attendance at each school is 16·5. Sixteen of these schools, with 195 children, are in the District of Marlborough, from which I have not received a statement of cost. The cost of such schools in the other districts is £29,850, or about £5 8s. for each child. A rather large proportion of the expenses of inspection and management—not included in the £5 8s.—is chargeable to these small schools.

The distribution of these schools (not exceeding 24 each) and the cost per head (neglecting pence) are as follows:—

Auckland	...	109	schools,	with	1,761	pupils	...	£5	1 0
Taranaki	...	12	"	"	214	"	...	4	14 0
Wanganui	...	15	"	"	223	"	...	4	4 0
Wellington	...	17	"	"	250	"	...	5	18 0
Hawke's Bay	...	11	"	"	176	"	...	4	18 0
Marlborough	...	16	"	"	195	"	...		...
Nelson	...	37	"	"	615	"	...	4	14 0
Grey	...	9	"	"	127	"	...	5	13 0
Westland	...	11	"	"	158	"	...	5	12 0
North Canterbury		30	"	"	541	"	...	7	11 0
South Canterbury		12	"	"	207	"	...	5	6 0
Otago	...	39	"	"	716	"	...	5	13 0
Southland	...	28	"	"	525	"	...	5	9 0

In a calculation made a few months ago for another purpose I found that the average cost of maintenance (salaries and incidental expenses) of schools of not more than 50 pupils each (average attendance) was £5 11s. 7d. each at the end of last year. It appears, therefore, that schools of between 25 and 50 each are rather more costly (in proportion to numbers) than the very small ones. The reason of this is that many of the very small schools are "aided" schools, and that they receive aid in many cases limited to the Government capitation allowance, whereas a regularly constituted district school has a teacher paid according to the Board's scale of salary, and the salary is generally in excess of the amount derived from the capitation grant for the attendances at any small school.

Last year the cost of maintenance of all schools was £3 16s. 8d. for each pupil. At the same time the cost was only £3 6s. 10d. in schools of more than 50 each. In schools of more than 100 each (included in the statement of those of more than 50) the cost was £3 3s. 6d.

The regulations for payments by Boards on account of schools of less than 25 each are as follows:—

Auckland: Incidentals, £7 a year. Grants to aided schools not exceeding Government capitation (£4). Salary—for under 20, at £4 capitation; for 20 to 24, £110 (for women, £100).

New Plymouth: Salary at £4 5s. (capitation), and 10s. (capitation) for incidentals.

Wanganui: Salary at £4 5s., provided the district gives a satisfactory supplement. The capitation for incidentals appears to be about 3s. 6d.

Wellington: Salary, £100. Incidentals, £8 (a school).

Hawke's Bay: Subsidy to a school—under 20, £4 10s. (capitation) for a certificated teacher, £4 for an uncertificated; for 20 to 24 children, £90 to £98. Incidentals, about 9s. (capitation).

Marlborough: Not known.

Nelson: No scale.

Grey: Under 15 pupils, capitation of £4 10s.; 15 to 22 inclusive, £90; 23 and 24, £92 and £96. Incidentals, a sum of £6 10s.

Westland: 15 and under, capitation of £5; 16, £75; 17 to 24, £76 10s. to £108. Incidentals, a sum of £5.

North Canterbury: Under 20, £6 a head for a master if certificated, or £4 10s. for a mistress, on condition that salary is made up to £100 for a master or £70 for a mistress by local contributions. For schools above 19, £128. In some schools there is a sewing-mistress at £12. Apparently no scale for incidentals; present rate about 16s.

South Canterbury: Under 25, from Board, £5 a head for certificated master; £4 10s. for master uncertificated, or certificated mistress; £4 for uncertificated mistress, with local addition varying from £5 to £19, £5 being the addition when there are 24 children, with £1 added for every defect of one in the number, the limit being £19 when there are only 10 children. Incidentals, a capitation of 10s.

Otago: Below 20, a subsidy not exceeding the Government capitation, and conditional on salary being made up to £100 for a master or £70 for a mistress. For 20 to 24 pupils, £124 for a master or £85 for a mistress, both subject to a deduction of £20 if the teacher has no certificate. Incidentals, for a school of 20 to 24, a sum of £15.

Southland: Below 25, a subsidy for a school below 25, on condition of salary being made up to £100. It is found impracticable to enforce this condition. The Board's Secretary informs me that the subsidy is £3 10s. or £4 a head. The incidentals come to about 10s. a head. A "supplementary scale of salaries" shows that for an average of 20 the salary is £100, increasing by an addition of £6 a pupil to £124 for 24 children. I find that the average salary per pupil in schools under 24 is about £5.

Can you supply in a tabulated form the regulations or the scales according to which salaries are paid by the several Boards?—It seems to me impracticable to make one table that should exhibit a number of systems characterized by the diversity that is apparent on a comparison of the several scales now in use. The preceding answer shows how difficult such a task would be, even if limited to the smaller schools; extended to schools of all sizes it becomes, I think, impossible. Instead of attempting to make a table, I beg to hand in copies of the scales of staff and salary for the following districts: Auckland, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Wellington, Hawke's Bay, Grey, Westland, North Canterbury, South Canterbury, Otago, and Southland.

Can you propose a scale of staff and salaries that you think might be adopted and made to apply to the whole country?—Since I gave my opinion in favour of the adoption of a scale of that kind, offered to submit a scheme that I prepared in 1881, and proposed to prepare another better adapted to the present time, such changes have been made in the principles on which grants from the Treasury are to be paid, and such a great reduction in the income of Boards has been

announced, that the conditions on which my former views rested are altered, and I have not yet been able so to adapt myself to the coming state of things as to be able to deal with such a question as this with any confidence. Should the work of the Committee extend to next session, I may be in a better position to answer the question satisfactorily.

What do you think of the music as taught in our public schools?—I am not in as good a position as one of the Boards' Inspectors to answer this question. It is, however, within my knowledge that in some parts of the colony very great attention is paid to the subject. The Auckland Board, for example, has taken great trouble to secure for its teachers adequate instruction in the Tonic Sol-fa method, and insists on attendance upon such instruction until satisfactory attainments have been made. Many teachers in other parts of the colony are acquainted with this method and able to use it in their schools. This method, which is thoroughly scientific and, in my judgment, far superior to any other method, can be mastered and used by persons who have very little musical talent. In the hands of those who have musical talent in a fair or in a high degree the results of the use of this method are sure to be good. The regulations give teachers the option of using this method or any other. There are teachers gifted with good musical ability who obtain excellent results by the use of other methods. As a rule, however, I fear that little is done in the way of singing where the Board does not take an active interest in the matter. I attach a very high value to singing on account of its refining influence, and also because it affords one of the best possible means of giving a cheerful tone to a school without any tendency to disorder.

Have you any remarks to make on the Syllabus of standard examinations, in view of proposals that have been made for altering it?—I had an opportunity of stating my views on the subject in a memorandum which I addressed to the Minister of Education in January, 1885. It will save time and printing if I refer to that memorandum (Appendix to Journals of House of Representatives, 1885, E.–1c), and say briefly that I do not think the Syllabus, if reasonably interpreted —if interpreted, for example, in the spirit of the official notes issued by the department in June, 1881—is too exacting. There is no subject included in it that I should like to see omitted from it. The assumption that underlies it is that the Government capitation allowance is sufficient to secure the services of teachers competent to impart thorough instruction on good methods within the range of the primary-school subjects. Considering that there is no means of securing accord between the authority that prescribes the Syllabus and the officers engaged in inspecting the schools, I wonder that the working of the regulations has been attended by so little dissatisfaction.

Has your attention been directed to a report made upon the standard Syllabus by a Committee of the Otago Board of Education?—Yes; I have read it with care. I think it would have had more value if it had afforded the means of knowing the status and qualifications of the gentlemen whose opinions are given at length. In one respect a strange mistake has been made. It is said that the returns received "exhibit a very remarkable harmony of thought and feeling." The only qualification is in the remark "that in the returns the consensus of opinion, though remarkably full, is not absolutely complete: there are some dissentients, though the number of them is remarkably small." Among the "educational authorities" named as having made returns are Sir Robert Stout, Minister of Education at the time, and the Inspector-General of Schools. Sir R. Stout's return to the circular was in the form of a letter, written by me at his direction, and stating that the Syllabus expressed his views on the subject. I believe that I was not asked for an opinion, and certainly I did not give one. I take this opportunity of expressing my opinion that, if the State holds a practical monopoly of primary education, it ought not to teach less than the Syllabus prescribes; that the rate at which the State has been paying for primary education ought to suffice for the maintenance of teachers capable of imparting all the instruction required by the Syllabus; and that it would be wise for the State to take the Inspectors into its own service, and employ them as agents to assist the teachers in understanding the actual requirements of the Syllabus, and in choosing the best methods of meeting those requirements.

APPENDIX.

REPLIES OF INSPECTORS TO FOLLOWING CIRCULAR.

(Circular.)

DEAR SIR,— House of Representatives, Wellington, 10th November, 1887.

The question of the working of our Educational Act is now being inquired into by a Parliamentary Committee.

I should be extremely obliged if your Board would favour the Committee with its views upon the following:—

1. As to raising the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid:
2. As to the payment of fees for higher standards:
3. Whether your Board can make any suggestions as to the more economical working of the Act:
4. If your Board can suggest any alteration which would improve the Syllabus.

I should add that the Committee propose to ask your Inspector, and also the various Teachers' Associations, for their views on the above points.

JAMES G. WILSON,
Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. W. C. HODGSON, Nelson, to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Nelson, 21st November, 1887.

I have the honour to submit to you my views with regard to the four points on which my opinion has been invited, premising that my replies are given without any previous reference to the opinions of my employers, the members of the Nelson Education Board, as I understand that an entirely independent judgment is what is required from me.

1. If the raising of the age upon which capitation allowance is to be paid be considered from a purely educational stand point, I am of opinion that the age of admission to our public schools should never have been fixed at less than six years. That very young children should be compelled to sit day after day, for several hours, very partially occupied, in the often impure atmosphere of a schoolroom, can be good neither for their mental nor their bodily health. I have no faith in the kindergarten system, or by whatever other outlandish name State nurseries may be dubbed. The proper training-field for children under six is home.

But, from a money point of view, I confess that I do not see how the serious loss of revenue that wonld ensue from the exclusion of children under six years old is to be made up, unless a special and additional capitation grant were made to the small country schools, now so exceptionally numerous in this district. The proposed exclusion would inevitably result in the closing of three-fourths of these most valuable establishments. This consideration, however, by no means affects my contention that the admission of very young children is, educationally, not only useless, but mischievous.

2. Although I have grave misgivings as to the effects of exacting fees for higher standards, which should only be done, it appears to me, as a last resource, the imposition of a school-fee amounting to half of the capitation allowance on all scholars beyond the Fifth Standard seems, on the whole, to be less open to objection than any other mode of raising revenue that occurs to me. The number of children in this district who would be affected by such a device would be about 300, but there can be no doubt that the levying of a school-fee would at once largely thin the ranks of the Sixth and Seventh Standard scholars.

3. From the outset the Nelson Education Board has been honourably distinguished for its economical administration of the funds placed at its disposal, and where every item of expenditure is reduced to its lowest terms it is difficult to suggest any further retrenchment that will not obviously affect the efficiency of the service. For example, the allowances to School Committees for fuel, cleaning, and small repairs are on so modest a scale that they do not admit of the employment of "caretakers," who, in other districts, as a matter of course, undertake the lighting of fires and the cleaning of schoolrooms. In Nelson all this is, of necessity, almost invariably done by the children themselves. The same spirit of carefulness is displayed in the grants for repairs, the funds for such necessary matters as the repainting of school-buildings being, indeed, occasionally doled out on a scale that may be termed parsimonious. By far the largest portion of the Board's annual maintenance fund is absorbed by teachers' salaries, which accounts for about four-fifths of the Board's annual expenditure. Here, again, the margin of possible reduction is painfully narrow. The best paid master in the Board's service receives no more than £300 a year, without residence, while the number of teachers whose salary exceeds £150 amounts to no more than fourteen. The remuneration of the vast majority of the head-masters varies from £100 to £120 per annum, that of the head-mistresses ranging from £72 to £100. Any serious reduction in this scale of salaries would simply mean that, in future, the Board would have to rest content with the services of uncertificated and presumably inferior teachers, the present rate of remuneration being, in many instances, insufficient to command the services of certificated or competent teachers.

4. I should deprecate any alteration of the Syllabus at present on the following grounds: After much consideration, and after the opinions of the Inspectors and other competent advisers had been taken, the Syllabus was revised little more than two years ago, the amended regulations not having come into force, indeed, until January, 1886. It is better, on the whole, to put up with the inconsistencies and imperfections that admittedly exist in the present Syllabus than to be perpetually meddling with the school-course. The alleged grievances, of which so much has been made, do not appear to me to be so intolerable as to warrant a second change being made before the present regulations have had a fair trial. Once in five years is quite often enough to revise the work of the Syllabus.

I have, &c.,
W. C. HODGSON,
Inspector of Schools, Nelson and Marlborough.

The Chairman of the Committee on Education,
House of Representatives.

Mr. R. J. O'SULLIVAN to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,—

Answer 1. I approve of raising the age.
Answer 2. I am doubtful about this; I am inclined to favour it.
Answer 3. Doing away with Boards.
Answer 4. I think the Syllabus, when judiciously dealt with, is not too much.

R. J. O'SULLIVAN,
Inspector of Schools.

James G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R.,
Chairman of Education Committee

Mr. J. SMITH to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

Hokitika, 21st November, 1887.

SIR,—

I have the honour, in reply to your memorandum of the 14th instant, to give as requested, my own opinion on the questions raised in the circular of the 10th November:—

1. As to raising the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid: Assuming retrenchment to be inevitable, this is perhaps the least mischievous form it could take. Apart from the loss which it would entail upon Boards the chief objection would probably be made on behalf of the poorer classes. To many such it is of great importance that their children should begin to earn their own living at as early a date as possible; and the delay of a year in admitting them to the school would proportionately delay the arrival of this relief to the parents; and, though this might be none the worse for the children, it would probably be looked upon as a grievance by the parents. It might be possible, however, for Boards to continue to admit them as at present, without counting them in calculating the average attendance until they reach the statutory age; in which case this slight objection would fall to the ground.

It is to be hoped that, if this alteration, as well as the proposed reduction of the capitation grant to £3 15s. per head be determined on, the Legislature will see fit to give Boards at least three months' notice before giving effect to the new regulations, seeing that Boards cannot legally reduce salaries without giving that amount of notice to their teachers, &c.

2. Fees to the higher standards: I consider that this would be a very unwise innovation, and (presuming it to be intended to supplement the Board's funds) would defeat its object. In this district it is certain that many more children would leave school after passing Standard IV., than would remain to pay fees for the Fifth and Sixth. I am convinced that for every one who remained there would be at least two who would leave rather than pay a fee of, say, 10s. a quarter. Thus, for every £2 per annum derived from fees, the Board would lose £7 10s., the capitation on the two leaving.

The plan would also press unduly upon the poorer classes, whose children, however promising, would have little or no chance of advancing beyond Standard IV., and, consequently, would in this district, be debarred from the annual competition for a scholarship.

If it is necessary to provide further funds for educational purposes I would suggest that they be obtained by means of a special rate, which might be made payable in the shape of an additional 1d. or 2d. in the pound on the ordinary borough and county rates, to be levied by those bodies upon a requisition from the Boards at the proper time; the amount so raised to be handed over to the Boards as received. This would be preferable to having a separate and distinct rate, as the cost of collection would be next to nothing.

3. Suggestions for the more economical working of the Act: In my opinion, a very large saving might be effected by sweeping away either the Boards or the Committees. I am disposed to think that the former course is preferable, if combined with a rearrangement of Committees in the direction of increasing the extent of school districts, and permanently fixing their boundaries; in more strictly defining, while somewhat increasing, their powers, but transferring the right of appointment and dismissal of teachers to the central department. The Committees would then be, as they are in Victoria, boards of advice. Although, in my opinion, the abolition of Boards is desirable on common grounds, there are other and stronger reasons that might be advanced for the change.

Should the country not yet be ripe for so important a change, a step in that direction might be made (which would, indirectly, be conducive to economy) by adopting a suggestion that has been repeatedly made by this and other Boards, namely, that the inspection of schools should be undertaken by the department. This was provided for in Mr. Bowen's original Education Bill, but was altered during the passage of the Bill through the House.

4. Alterations to improve the Syllabus: At present I think there can be no doubt that the preponderance of opinion is to the effect that the Syllabus is overloaded, and provides far more than is necessary, and much that is absolutely valueless, in a system of free primary education.

In my opinion, the compulsory, or "pass," subjects should be limited to reading and spelling, writing, arithmetic, English composition, and grammar, as far as the Fourth Standard, with the outlines of geography for the boys, and domestic economy and sewing for the girls, who have passed the Fourth.

Instruction in elementary science, music, and drawing, however desirable, cannot be profitably imparted, excepting by specialists and as regards science with the help of a considerable amount of expensive apparatus.

The absurdity of requiring all elementary school teachers to "pass" in music and drawing before they can obtain even the lowest certificate is, I believe, peculiar to New Zealand, and would long ago have been condemned but for the questionable leniency of the authorities in granting certificates to all persons passing in the ordinary subjects who make the feeblest attempt at music and drawing.

The ordinary teacher's certificate, therefore, gives an official guarantee that the holder is capable of teaching vocal music and drawing, when, in many instances, he could scarcely distinguish one tune from another, and knows absolutely nothing about geometrical drawing or perspective. If these subjects are retained in the Syllabus, the department should grant a special certificate (after a reasonably severe examination) for them, as is done in England, and only persons holding such certificates should be permitted or expected to teach them.

At a time when there is so great an outcry, and even a greater necessity for rigorous retrenchment, it may not be out of place, in conclusion, to draw the attention of the Committee to the following facts, viz.:—

(1.) That large sums of public money are now annually expended in providing secondary and higher education, chiefly for the benefit of the wealthier classes, at the expense of the taxpayers in general.

(2.) That in providing free primary education of the best description, and thus opening the gateways of knowledge to all alike, the State does all that it should be expected or allowed to do.
(3.) That it is no more the duty of the State to provide what may be called the luxuries of education, than it is the duty of Charitable-aid Boards to provide luxuries of food and clothing for persons requiring help.
(4.) That a more liberal provision for, and a better system of awarding, scholarships would give the poorer classes all the educational advantages of which they could profitably avail themselves.
(5.) That the establishment of two universities (with the prospect of two more being shortly demanded) is, to say the least of it, premature, when all England, which contains half a dozen towns, each having a larger population than New Zealand, is satisfied with four.
(6.) That such portions of the funds for supporting this system of higher education as are derived from land endowments are quite as much public money as that which is annually provided from the general revenue, and that this principle has been already recognised by making the reserves for primary education, no matter where situated, applicable to that purpose for the country generally.
(7.) That, but for the diversion of so large a portion of the public funds to the establishment and maintenance of this system of higher education, there would be no necessity for crippling the primary schools by any further retrenchment.

I have, &c.,
JOHN SMITH,
Inspector of Schools, Westland.

Mr. G. HOGBEN to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

North Canterbury Board of Education, Christchurch,
28th November, 1887.

SIR,—

I have the honour to reply to your communication of the 10th instant *re* the working of the Education Act, and in doing so must apologize for my delay, which has been caused by the incessant occupation entailed by duties in connection with the examination of schools.

1. In regard to the first point named, the raising of the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid, I am of opinion that it might without injury to the educational system be raised to six years. Children would lose nothing by this change in respect of future progress at school; but would be able to pass Standard I. just as soon as they do now. I notice no difference between children in the various standard classes who have entered at six under existing circumstances and those who have entered at five, except perhaps an advantage on the side of the former, due probably to the increased robustness gained by an additional year spent for the most part in the open air. To raise the age to seven would, however, have a different effect. The maturity of mind is sufficiently developed for steady work of a moderate amount, and a delay of a year at the start would in such a case involve the loss of a year all through the school course.

[As to the age of leaving school, see section 3.]

2. I do not think that it is desirable to exact fees from children in the higher standards, for the following reasons: (*a.*) One of the objects of the higher standards is, I take it, that the State should benefit as much as possible by the development of the intelligence of the children of good parts. Those whose parents are not in good circumstances would either be unable to pay, or the parents would have a stronger inducement to withdraw their children, say, on passing the Fourth Standard than they have at present; for even now it is most frequently the sharp pupils, especially the boys, who are taken away at an early age to fill situations of various kinds. (*b.*) Those who go to secondary schools already benefit to far more than the extent of any fees that could be charged for the higher standards in primary schools; for the average fee paid at secondary schools in the colony is about £10, and the average cost per head is about £27, the benefit received being therefore £17 as against £3 19s. per head. (See E.–1, 1887, pp. xx. and xxi.) Though the funds of the secondary schools are not for the most derived from consolidated revenue, yet they come from a public source, rents obtained upon lands set aside as educational reserves. (*c.*) A great difficulty has been experienced in many districts in England in regard to the collection of fees, and I do not consider that the difficulty would be less when the number of children was small in proportion to the amount gained thereby.

3. I have several suggestions to offer under this head, and for the sake of convenience I will arrange them in the order of the items named in Table N of the tenth annual report of the Minister of Education (E.–1, 1887, p. ix.).

(1.) *Boards' Administration.*—I would strongly advocate as the most important element in a policy of retrenchment such a measure as would include the abolition of Boards of Education. Probably little fault could be found with the spirit in which the Boards attempt to administer the Act, yet I look upon this item as to a large extent unnecessary. On a moderate estimate, probably £7,000 or £8,000 could be saved by the transference to the central department of most of the control and management now exercised by the Boards. This saving would be direct; but still more important would be the additional economy and efficiency brought about indirectly by such a change. The Boards have no particular interest in a policy of retrenchment, and, as far as I am aware, their present administration is more or less extravagant.

(2.) *Inspection and Examination.*—If Inspectors were the officers of the central department—as logically they ought to be—reports from them as to the need for expenditure would serve as a check upon the demands of local bodies. At present, the opinions of

Inspectors are of little or no weight—in this district of no weight at all—in determining expenditure. The sources of extravagance are chiefly in regard to buildings (see observations under that head); but also the amounts expended in school furniture and apparatus, the allowances to Committees, and such items as are due to irregular and imperfect organization of teachers. Again, if the Inspectors were placed under the central department, and the districts partly rearranged, probably two or three fewer Inspectors would be required. Something also could be saved by having uniform examinations for pupil-teachers, conducted by Inspectors, the same set of papers being used in all parts of the colony. This would have another advantage—the uniformity of attainments in pupil-teachers of the same nominal standing in all parts of the colony; and the centralisation of the Inspectorate would have a like effect on the character of the standard examinations, and on the amount of work expended in drawing up questions for those examinations. At present, about one-twelfth of the time of each Inspector is taken up in making questions or sets of examination-cards.

(3.) *Incidental Expenses.*—Side by side with the abolition of Boards I should be inclined to say that there should be an extension of the areas controlled by School Committees, so that each Committee should have the control of six or ten schools. This might be effected gradually by forming no new districts (unless under exceptional circumstances), and by offering inducements for amalgamation of existing Committees—for instance, a rating-power for all Committees representing six to ten schools. I would do away with all control by the Committees which gives them power to interfere with the teaching or other internal arrangements of the schools, and would confine their duties to the care of buildings, to such supervision of the conduct of teachers as can be exercised only by residents in a district; and, in case of rating-powers being granted, to the necessary steps connected with the carrying-out of those powers. The allowances under the head of incidental expenses might be reduced by one-third, or even abolished altogether, and the deficiency met by a small local rate imposed by School Committees.

(4.) *Teachers' Salaries.*—The expenditure might be reduced by rearrangement of staffs, giving in many instances larger classes to each teacher; and also by the employment of female teachers —to a greater extent than prevails at present—in single-handed schools. Female teachers of higher qualifications can be secured at lower salaries than are paid to masters in those schools (at all events in this district). No extensive reductions of teachers' salaries is advisable, for the supply of capable teachers is not equal to the demand, and nothing could be more injurious to education than such a lowering of salaries as would affect the quality of the teaching-power. The benefits derived from normal schools as at present existing in the colony are somewhat problematical. The literary part of the work might very well be done with existing facilities afforded at the four university colleges, and the remaining or technical portions of the work would perhaps be better looked after if intending teachers were placed as probationers under selected headmasters. The cost of this would be scarcely more than nominal.

(5.) *Scholarship Allowances.*—The scholarship allowances made under the vote for primary education might very well be abolished, and the secondary schools might be required to provide open scholarships for pupils from primary schools out of the funds at their disposal.

(6.) *Buildings.*—Under the item, "Buildings, Sites, Plans, &c.," there is placed a sum of £65,007 14s. 6d. (I have quoted the figures in E.–1, 1887, as that is the only return I have at hand). The increased number in average attendance for the year 1886 was 3,103; so that the average cost of new buildings required for this increase was £21 per child. Judging from the way in which the portion allotted was spent in this district, I should say that £35,000 to £40,000 would have been a very liberal allowance indeed.

The sources of extravagance are: (*a*) That schools of too costly a character have been built, (*b*) unnecessary schools have been built, (*c*) masters' houses have been erected where there was no necessity for anything of the kind.

I would venture to suggest that in each case of the erection of a new school a local contribution (raised by a rate) might reasonably be expected to the extent of one-third or one-fourth of the total cost; with a proviso that the buildings should be of such a character as would suffice for the probable requirements of the district for some time to come. Otherwise, dummy schools of small value might be set up, and then the Government might be expected to find money for their extension shortly afterwards.

Extensions should not be subject to the condition of a local contribution, as there would often on that account be a strong local opposition to a much-needed enlargement of school premises. A report should be required from the Inspector of the district upon every claim for enlargement of schools. A larger contribution might be asked towards new buildings in cases where the number of children fell below a specified minimum—say twenty-five—and, in addition to this share of the initial cost, an annual contribution towards the cost of maintenance equal in amount to the capitation allowance upon the number of children required to make up the said minimum. In many outlying districts a subsidy might be paid for a coach to carry children to the nearest existing school, at a cost far less than that of the erection and maintenance of a new school.

I would mention one change, not directly connected with any one of the items in Table N already referred to, but rather with the first section of your circular. The age of leaving school might without any great injustice be reduced to fourteen, and Standard VII. abolished altogether. This would be better than abolishing Standard VI. Sharp children would be encouraged to go on to the Sixth Standard, which they could easily pass before they were fourteen. On the other hand, if a child is not clever enough to pass Standard VI. by that age, I hardly think the State would gain much by allowing him to remain at school until he was able to pass. The saving under this head (as under section 1) would not be very great.

4. I believe that the syllabus admits of considerable improvement; but with all respect I venture humbly to suggest that the details of such improvement could be best settled by the Governor in Council after a conference of Inspectors had been held under the direction of the

Inspector-General, and had taken into consideration suggestions not only from its own members, but from educational institutes and other bodies or individuals interested. As far as my own opinion is concerned, the following points seem to require the first attention: (*a.*) Restriction of pass subjects to reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic in Standards I. and II., and to the same subjects, with the addition of grammar and composition, in Standards III. to VI. (*b.*) A smaller number of class subjects to be required from teachers in small schools. (*c.*) Grouping of Standards IV. to VI., or any of them (when these classes are taught class subjects by the same teacher) for the same portions of those class subjects, alternation of work being provided for in a similar manner to that laid down in No. 17 of the Standard Regulations. (*d.*) The assigning of class marks upon all the subjects (pass and class) taught in a school, instead of upon the work in a few only.

I would lay particular stress on (*a*) and (*b*). The omission of drawing from the list of pass subjects is a matter almost of immediate urgency. Being different in character from the other pass subjects, it disturbs, instead of aiding, a classification based upon them. I believe that one of my colleagues, Dr. Anderson, has stated his opinions in regard to the syllabus at some length. With these opinions, in the main, I agree. I have, &c.,

GEORGE HOGBEN,
Inspector of Schools, North Canterbury.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. L. B. WOOD to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Education Office, Christchurch, 26th November, 1887.

I have the honour, in accordance with your request, to submit my views on the topics mentioned in the circular issued by the Education Committee. I very much regret that the pressure of official duties at this time compels me to make my remarks somewhat brief.

1. I am opposed to raising the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid, for the following reasons:—

(*a.*) As injuriously affecting the moral and intellectual welfare of the children. By raising the age children would practically be excluded from the schools at an age at which it would be of inestimable advantage to a large proportion of them to be receiving training in habits of discipline and attention. Without early attendance at school the poorer population of our towns acquire habits which make their education afterwards a work of enormous difficulty. Further, the average at which the pupils pass the First Standard is at present something like nine years; and this on all sides is admitted to be much too high to permit of any but a small proportion remaining at school to receive the benefits of the instruction in the higher standards. To raise the age of admittance would make this proportion even smaller. I may here point out that early infant education appears of such importance to the Education Department in Great Britain that they make large annual grants to efficient schools in which the ages of the pupils range from three to seven years:

(*b.*) As diminishing the income of the Boards without effecting any corresponding diminution in the expenditure required to staff the schools. To make this point clear I take a practical illustration: By raising the age to six the capitation grant to the North Canterbury Board would be diminished by something like £4,000, while the circumstances of the schools are such that not more than £800 of a reduction on teachers' salaries could be made.

2. The payment of fees for higher standards: I have no strong opinion on this subject, but I may say that I would view with disfavour any change likely to reduce the numbers in the higher standards. There can be no doubt that a year in the Fifth or Sixth Standard is out of all proportion valuable when compared with the time spent in the lower standards. Most of our pupils who leave school at the Fourth-Standard stage are, I am afraid, but ill equipped to make any further progress in intellectual pursuits; whereas the youth who has received the more-bracing mental discipline of one additional year is much more likely to be confirmed in habits and tastes which will be cultivated with ease and pleasure in after years. Under our present system the poor man has to regret only the temporary loss of bread-winning power which he incurs by keeping his boy at school after he has been freed from the obligation to attend by passing the prescribed standard: impose fees, and there is a double burden to be borne.

3. The more economical working of the Act: Under this head it is possible to effect retrenchment and yet increase the efficiency of the schools in two directions:—

(*a.*) By reducing the number of subjects to be taught in the smaller schools, and allowing further grouping of classes than at present; thus making it possible to adopt a system of organization by which a single teacher could instruct a larger number of pupils (see under section 4):

(*b.*) By the abolition of the Boards. I am strongly of opinion that, were the Boards abolished, and the control of the schools centred in the department at Wellington, nothing but good would be the result. The Boards, constituted as they are by members elected by the School Committees, naturally intrust large powers to these bodies, and the friction that ensues, owing to this multiplication of control, greatly interferes with the efficiency of the system. I do not consider it advisable for me to enter here upon a criticism of the special case of my own Board, with the working of which I am of course best acquainted. I may, however, point out that, in the report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the unsatisfactory state of education in North Canterbury, published about eighteen months ago, evidence is not wanting to show that this Board discharged its duties in a manner far from satisfactory.

At present the administration of the Boards costs fully £10,000 per annum. I think I am within the mark when I say that their work could be done by the department for something like £3,000.

The changes necessitated by the abolition of the Boards would be—

(1.) The taking over the Inspectors by the department. This step has been advocated by every educationist in the colony. An additional saving would be effected by this change. How

much the amount would be I cannot well say, but I may roughly state two items: (*a.*) The expense of labour saved by using one series of examination papers throughout the colony, instead of a different series in each district, would fall little short of £500. (*b.*) The Inspectors being graded in some such order as Inspector-General, Senior Inspectors, and Assistant Inspectors, and one Inspector with two assistants being put in charge of a district containing from 18,000 to 20,000 pupils, a reduction of about £2,000 could be effected in salaries. Assistants, acting under the supervision of Senior Inspectors, would thus be employed to do a considerable portion of the work at present intrusted to higher-salaried officials—a change that would prove beneficial, especially to the country schools, if the assistants were chosen from the ranks of the most promising young teachers.

(2.) A local authority would have to be established somewhat similar to the present School Committees, but shorn of a great deal of the power which these bodies have hitherto been allowed to exercise. This body might, I think, with advantage, be made to correspond in constitution and functions to the Boards of Advice in Victoria.

(3.) The school buildings would be erected under the direct control of the department. A check would thus be given to all tendency to extravagance under this head.

4. Alterations to improve the Syllabus: I think the Syllabus capable of great improvement:—

(*a.*) By reducing the number of pass subjects to four in Standards I. and II., and to five in the higher Standards, viz.:—Standards I., II.: 1. Reading; 2. Spelling and dictation; 3. Writing; 4. Arithmetic. Standards III. to VI.: The same, with the addition of (5) Grammar and composition.

(*b.*) By adopting the present group of class subjects, but restricting geography and drawing entirely to this group.

(*c.*) By grading the schools so as to relieve the smaller schools from the over-pressure put upon them: (1) Grade school, in which two class subjects shall be compulsory; (2) grade school, in which three class subjects shall be compulsory; (3) grade school, in which all subjects shall be compulsory.

(*d.*) By making provision for grouping standards in the first grade school for instruction in class subjects.

According to this scheme geography and drawing are withdrawn from the pass group, and in small schools fewer subjects are taken up and greater facilities are afforded for grouping classes. By this means I would hope to obtain a much higher standard of proficiency in the real elementary subjects. At present the Inspector, keeping in view the fact that the results of his examination must give a classification of the school that will prove suitable for purposes of instruction, is frequently compelled to ignore the regulation that makes failing in one subject a failure for the standard; and in some of the most important subjects, notably reading and writing, he has to reduce his pass-mark to a very low level of merit indeed. That is, he rewards the imperfect treatment of a subject by giving the pass, and thus he perpetuates teaching which produces work of very indifferent quality.

By the adoption of (*c*) and (*d*) it would be possible to effect a considerable reduction in the teaching staff in most of the districts. In this district alone a saving in salaries, amounting to between £2,200 and £2,500, could be made without in any way impairing the efficiency of the schools.

I have, &c.,

L. B. Wood, M.A.,
Inspector of Schools.

James G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R.,
Chairman, Education Committee,
House of Representatives, Wellington.

Mr. W. Fidler to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Board of Education, Auckland, 25th November, 1887.

I have the honour to reply to yours of the 10th instant, containing four questions *re* the working of the Education Act.

Answer to Question 1: I consider it cruelty to children to keep them in school for about four hours a day at such a tender age as that from five to six. The kindergarten system, where the children are not under such physical restraint as when they are taught, as at present, in the infant-rooms, is best suited for the teaching of such young children; but it is impracticable for the State to adopt this method generally in its schools without great expense.

A child will, in my opinion, learn quite as much from six to nine as from five to nine, and will on entering his tenth year be a healthier child if he has not been sent to school before six.

The attempt to stimulate too soon the intellectual faculties, and to bring to nerve what should be shared by the whole system, is especially disastrous to those children whose muscular powers are most likely to be called on in later life.

Answer to Question 2: In the abstract, I believe that the primary-school curriculum should be free throughout to all, and that this matter of education is one in which a State might well err on the side of liberality; but justice should precede liberality.

In the present state of the finances of the colony, when it is evident that some reduction should be made in the cost of education, and when it seems that the sooner a reasonable adjustment takes place the less will the whole fabric be likely to be seriously affected, I am inclined to express my opinion in favour of the imposition of fees in Standards V. and VI. as one of the means by which a reduction in the cost may be made. The fee-system in these standards could be done away with when the cause which brought about its introduction ceased.

Those who will be able to allow their children to remain at school until they reach Standard V. will for the most part be able to pay fees for the education of such of their children as they wish to have taught in these higher standards, so that there would be little difficulty in the matter of the recovery of fees in such classes (Standards V. and VI.).

If fees are imposed in these standards, I think the Committees should be empowered to remit the fee of any scholar, the remission of whose fees is recommended by the headmaster, on the ground that the scholar has marked ability, and that his parent or guardian is unable to pay the fee.

Answer to Question 3: I think that, besides the means referred to in answers to Questions 1 and 2, a reduction should be made by lessening the salaries of teachers and of other officials of the Boards which are over £150 per annum. While the incomes of all other classes of the community are being seriously affected in these times, it can be no grievance for those engaged in educational work to suffer a reasonable reduction of salary.

If country School Committees were chosen from wider districts, so that each Committee had charge of several schools, the clerical work of the Boards' officers would be lessened, and some saving thereby effected; and the *personnel* of the Committees would be greatly improved by such change. The boundaries of the present districts are so narrow in many cases as to allow little choice of men.

Answer to Question 4: On the whole, I am well satisfied with the Syllabus. I think that continual change is oftentimes a greater evil than the minor defects which are sought to be remedied. The present Syllabus is still new.

I am, &c.,
WM. FIDLER, M.A.,
Inspector of Schools.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R.,
Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. W. MURRAY to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— New Plymouth, 24th November, 1887.

In reply to circular I have the honour to forward opinions on the questions contained therein.

1. In country schools the change to six years would be, to some extent, an advantage. But little work of any real value is done by the lower preparatory class, as the heavy Syllabus and the number of classes compel teachers to confine their attention to the work required from standard classes. I hold the opinion that at seven a child will learn and do more in such schools in one year than in the two years preceding that age. Town or large district schools have, however, many advantages. In these it would be a mistake to raise the age, as young children can be readier trained to habits of attention, good discipline, and the conditions favourable to class instruction.

In this district, where there are a number of small schools, some special or extra aid to such would be absolutely necessary, if the age were raised, to maintain efficient teaching-power.

I direct attention to the claims of a number of children whose ages are high, and whose attainments are only equal to the work of Standards II. or III. Provision for their remaining at school until the compulsory standard has been passed should be arranged for.

2. A small fee ought to be charged for all standards, likewise a charge for stationery for all pupils above Standard III.

3. Were Committees abolished, and the Board composed of one or two members elected by large districts, similar to county ridings and boroughs, the working of the Act would be less costly and more satisfactorily performed. Much expense is incurred by advertising vacancies and tenders; these should be confined to the Government *Gazette*. In connection with the first, were inspection and all examinations undertaken by the department, applications received and selected by that office could be forwarded to Boards, along with reports as to ability and experience of each candidate.

Salaries ought to be paid on a fixed scale throughout the colony. The low scale here does not induce good teachers to make application for schools in this district, consequently the greater number come from those who are neither capable nor desirable. Frequently small schools are intrusted to incompetent or inexperienced persons, who gain their experience at the cost of their pupils.

Any serious reduction of the scale here will certainly tend to drive away the few competent teachers in this district to others, where the monetary inducement is greater.

4. The Syllabus work for Standard IV., with the addition of simple proportion, easy vulgar fractions, the inflection of the verb, and the detailed geography of the Australian Colonies, would give better results if it were extended over a five years' course. History as now taken by Standard III. would suffice for Standard V. Perspective, geometrical, and model drawing could be placed among class subjects and examined as such. The remaining portion of the present Syllabus could be taken over two years in Standards VI. and VII.

I am, &c.,
WILLIAM MURRAY,
Inspector.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R.,
Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

Mr. W. J. ANDERSON to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Christchurch, 26th November, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of the 10th November respecting educational questions, and to make the following reply:—

1. I deprecate any interference with the existing school-age of five years, for the reason that it would in many ways be injurious to the moral and intellectual interests of our children to raise the age to seven, while the adoption of six as a limit would make but a very small reduction in the work to be done in our schools, and would consequently effect little real economy. In large centres the change would probably permit no reduction on the staff beyond the employment of a few pupil-teachers less, and in the smaller places no reduction at all in the majority of cases. The reduction in income would, on the other hand, be serious, and, this being lessened in a greater degree than

the necessities of work, the workers and the work must suffer. There are, besides, the two considerations that, if town children of the poorer class are not introduced to good associations at an early age, undesirable habits may be contracted or confirmed, and that, however small the educational benefit our children may receive in the schools between the ages of five and six (and I am bound to say it is not much more than barely appreciable), the change would still have a tendency to unfavourably affect the standard ages, already too high.

2. My sympathies are opposed to the payment of fees for the higher classes. I hold that as far as possible the poorer members of the community should, in respect of education, be placed on an equality with their richer neighbours, and that the sacrifice of the children's services during the continuance of their attendance at school should be the only special sacrifice involved. Again, difficulties in the collection and distribution of such moneys may be anticipated. A parent might, for instance, evade payment by keeping his children absent from a Fourth-Standard examination, and if the money be paid in for the schoolmaster's benefit the lower classes in his school might suffer.

3. Any substantial economy in the working of the Education Act, or any similar Act, must be mainly a matter of government and organization, and in these respects our New Zealand system is very faulty. So many considerations occur to me in this connection that it would be impossible to treat them at reasonable length. It may be sufficient to state the general conclusion that efficiency or economy, or both, would be promoted by—

(*a.*) Abolishing Education Boards, and placing the government of the schools directly in the hands of the Minister;

(*b.*) Equalising the educational districts, and assigning each to the charge of an Inspector, who would act in conjunction with an Assistant- or Sub-Inspector;

(*c.*) Requiring in the case of new buildings a local contribution of one-fourth of the estimated cost, and in the case of schools whose average attendance falls below any determined minimum a contribution towards the ordinary expenditure of a fixed sum inversely proportioned to the attendance;

(*d.*) Imposing on the school reserves the burden of erecting, maintaining, and extending school buildings, with or without an annual subsidy from Parliament;

(*e.*) Diminishing or totally abolishing the influence exerted by School Committees over the internal management of schools, particularly in connection with the appointment, dismissal, and removal of teachers, and confining their functions substantially to the care of buildings, the collection of such subsidies as may be required, and the general supervision over the teachers' conduct, which none but local residents are competent to undertake;

(*f.*) Diminishing the number of separate School Committees, and giving the residents the option of electing at an annual meeting a single representative of their interests, or any odd number of representatives less than seven, at the same time abolishing the rule of cumulative voting;

(*g.*) Exercising very fully powers of appointing, dismissing, and more especially of removing teachers from school to school, and paying them directly a salary of which the larger proportion shall be determined by the average attendance as at present. The smaller proportion might be determined by an improved system of classification, in which the work done from year to year should affect the teacher's status favourably or otherwise, or by a payment on the general class efficiency of his teaching as indicated below—the latter in preference as being the simpler mode, and not open to the objection that is now urged against a "bonus on certificates;"

(*h.*) Altering the Syllabus in such a way as to permit of more class-grouping, and reducing in the case of the smaller schools the number of subjects now compulsory.

4. The whole subject of our standard Syllabus and the rules in connection with it requires revision. I presume we have adhered so tenaciously to a cumbrous system of individual passes in standards chiefly through the feeling that with a weak control over schools this was the only way of securing the efficient treatment of the subjects; but with a strong administration, or even with the financial safeguard of a variation in the salaries of teachers dependent on their efficiency, the pass group of subjects may with safety be narrowed down to such as are found necessary to keep the classification of the pupils on a sound basis, and the remaining subjects may then be dealt with according to the circumstances of the schools in the way to secure the greatest economy of effort. At present a strict adherence to the rule of passing, as laid down in the regulations, would simply spoil the classification, and stands to a certain extent in the way of a convenient grouping for instruction. If an Inspector's examination is to do any real good, the classification for examination must substantially coincide with the classification for instruction, and it is not desirable that the child's position in the school should be determined, for instance, by his ability to draw without regard to his intelligence or capacity in other respects; nor again is it desirable that in geography or in history there should be any obstacle in the way of combining the three highest classes for instruction in one section or period, and arranging a triennial rotation. Without entering into minor details I have to suggest in this matter—

(*a.*) That an individual examination be made by the Inspector of the four subjects of reading, spelling and dictation, writing, and arithmetic, and that the children be required to pass in these subjects only;

(*b.*) That an individual examination be also made of the grammar and composition, and the result be recorded opposite the name of each pupil;

(*c.*) That in the two lowest standards some weakness in one of the four subjects first mentioned may be disregarded, but not a serious failure;

(*d.*) That in Standards III., IV., V., and VI. a similar weakness may be counterbalanced by evidence of capacity in the grammar and composition;

(*e.*) That the subjects of drawing, geography, history, science, and object-lessons be examined in such a way as to test the general quality of the teaching, and that the result be recorded in terms of a percentage of efficiency;

(*f.*) That similar estimates of general class efficiency be made of the subjects of reading (including subject-matter and comprehension), spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, and grammar, and be similarly recorded;

(*g.*) That the additional subjects remain substantially as they are, with the exception of subject-matter;

(*h.*) That the general class efficiency of the school be estimated by combining the percentages of general class efficiency; but that schools should be graded according to the teachers employed, and an allowance made of one or perhaps two subjects in favour of those having only one teacher; and

(*i.*) That a portion of the teacher's income be made dependent on the general class efficiency reaching a fair estimate.

I know that the last suggestion would not prove a popular one with teachers, and it is just possible that a strong control might be able to dispense with such an inducement; but it appears to provide a very convenient self-adjusting balance of labour and recompense.

I have, &c.,
W. J. Anderson, M.A., LL.D.,
Inspector to the North Canterbury Board of Education.

James G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. D. Petrie to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Naseby, Otago, 26th November, 1887.

I have only this day received your letter of the 10th instant, but I hope that my reply will be in time to be considered along with the evidence submitted to the Committee.

Question 1: I consider six the lowest age at which children should be admitted to a public school. On the average, a child who enters school at six will, in two years or at most in three, be in every way as far advanced as a child of the same age who has entered at five. In all parts of the colony the age at which Standard I. is on the average passed is now and has long been about nine years. If children generally entered school at five years of age, the time taken to reach the Standard I. stage of proficiency is absurdly long, and this shows that the pupils enter too young to take full advantage of the teaching. I do not think a higher age than six should be fixed, as it would practically raise all round the ages at which the standards are now passed.

Question 2: It seems to me very undesirable to charge fees for the higher standards. It is the interest of the State to have as many pupils as possible pass in standards higher than Standard IV. I do not doubt that the imposition of fees in Standards V. and VI. would greatly reduce the number of pupils who would study the work of these standards.

Question 3: I am of opinion that slight modifications in the Education Act would lead to a great saving of expense without any sacrifice of efficiency. Though it hardly comes within the scope of the question, I may perhaps indicate how these savings could be made.

The placing of the inspectorate under the Education Department would allow of very considerable savings. By this change some Inspectors, whose time cannot be very fully employed at present, would be able to lend assistance in other districts, and thus as many as two Inspectors could be dispensed with. It would allow, too, of occasional transference of Inspectors from one district to another—an arrangement which, I think, highly desirable in the interests of the teachers and the pupils. At present the Inspectors under each Board of Education have to draw up numerous sets of examination tests, and these have to be printed at considerable expense. The time now devoted to this work by the Inspectors in Otago, or North Canterbury, or Auckland would almost suffice to draw up examination tests for the whole colony, if the same tests were used throughout, as might very well be done. In the other twelve education districts the Inspectors would be relieved of this duty, and would be able to devote much more time to other departments of their work. Again, twice the cost incurred in getting these tests printed for one of the larger districts would produce a sufficient supply for every part of New Zealand. What has been said of standard-examination tests applies equally to the preparation and printing of examination papers for pupil-teachers and for scholarships. On the whole, I am decidedly of opinion that very considerable savings could be made by the changes indicated, and that the work of school inspection could be carried out for the whole colony with at least two Inspectors fewer than are at present required.

Great savings could, however, be made without making so radical a change in the Act as the placing of Inspectors under the Education Department. For these it would suffice if the department were authorised to issue to the district Inspectors all the examination tests to be used in the standard examination of schools. At the same time a uniform programme for pupil-teachers and scholarship examinations, to be in force throughout the colony, should be fixed by the Education Department, which should also draw up and issue to the several districts the examination questions to be used year by year. This arrangement could not allow of any reduction of the present staff of Inspectors, but it would set them free from a great deal of office-work for more important duties, and save much expense of stationery, and especially of printing; and all this, be it noted, with no sacrifice, but with a probable gain of efficiency.

I have long been of opinion that part of the cost of school-buildings should be borne by the districts in which they are erected. Some legal means of raising money would have to be created. In fact, Education Boards are practically irresponsible for all expenditure on this head, and it would be strange if abuses did not arise under such a system. The abuses that, as I think, exist consist of the needless multiplication of schools and the pulling-down of fairly suitable buildings to meet an outcry for better ones. Elected as Boards now are, it is often impossible to avoid abuses of these kinds, and I am convinced that the only true way of reforming them is to compel the districts in which new schools are required, to provide part of the cost of their erection. Such a

change in the law would certainly lead to notable economies in our national expenditure on education.

Question 4: The present Syllabus is, in my opinion, fairly suitable for large schools, but it is in many ways unsuitable for the smaller ones. There is an almost unanimous consensus of opinion among teachers and Inspectors in favour of abolishing the teaching of history in Standard III., and I think this change should certainly be made without delay. I should also like to see the arithmetic prescribed for the higher standards curtailed by the express exclusion of discount, present worth, and stocks, and the cutting down of decimal fractions to the most elementary treatment. I think, too, that formal grammar should be made a class subject, and that much greater importance should be attached to composition, which should rank with any of the other pass subjects. In the smaller schools teachers should be allowed to group together classes in formal grammar, geography, and history with much greater freedom than is now permitted. This would allow of much more thorough teaching than is now possible, for at present teachers have to take these subjects in so many definitely-prescribed sections that there is often no time to teach any of them thoroughly enough to make the treatment educative. This is a point on which only experts can understand how completely doing many things is incompatible with doing much. I cannot enter into the matter here in detail, but I would respectfully impress on your Committee the great importance of not sacrificing a thorough training in the cardinal subjects of instruction to a fine and philosophical division of the subjects that are merely secondary and subordinate.

I have never been satisfied with the programme of history laid down in the Syllabus. It seems to me to proceed on wrong lines, to begin with the unknown and the remote, and work down to the known and the present. The reverse of this is surely the true order. I should like to see our pupils, in studying history, begin with recent times and with the institutions that they see around them, and, if time allows, work back to the times in which these institutions had their origin and growth. The following changes seem to me to be desirable. Standard III. history should be abolished. In Standard IV. the history of the last fifty years or so should be studied; in Standard V. the period from the Revolution to the present time should be covered; and in Standard VI. a sketch of the earlier history should be added.

The arrangements for teaching science are now and have always been unsatisfactory. The method of lecture or object-lesson is not suitable for a proper handling of this subject. We need a text-book that could be put into the hands of teachers and pupils, covering the whole ground. Until this is done science-teaching will remain more or less of a sham.

The kind of examination report now prescribed by the department is, in my opinion, very unsuitable: it hampers an Inspector far too much, and makes him little better than a machine. He has to hear so many routine things that, in the five or six hours which he can devote to the examination of a school, he has insufficient time to properly test the intelligence and educative quality of the higher parts of the teaching. In my opinion, no person who had any practical knowledge of the work of inspection would for a moment dream of prescribing such a form. All that is required or that serves any useful purpose is a percentage showing the results in the pass subjects, and a short written estimate of the intelligence of the work in the school, the Inspector being left to note merits or faults in the non-pass subjects according to his discretion and judgment. I have no hesitation in saying that the effect of Inspectors' examinations, as they have to be conducted to satisfy the requirements of the existing report form, is less stimulating and healthful than it was ten years ago, and that the machine-like routine which it enforces is a weariness to all connected with the conduct of the public schools of the colony.

I regret that the late arrival of your letter does not afford me time to revise this rough statement of my views, and make it more worthy the perusal of the members of your Committee.

I have, &c.,

J. G. Wilson, Esq. D. Petrie, Inspector.

Mr. Robinson to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Education Office, Greymouth, 21st November, 1887.

Replying to your circular of the 10th instant I have the honour to report as follows:—

1. Considering the matter apart from its financial effect upon this district, I approve of the proposal to raise the entrance-age to six years. Provision should, I think, be made whereby children not less than five years of age could be admitted to large town schools where the kindergarten system is in use upon a payment of a fee (?) not exceeding for the year the amount paid by Government as capitation for each child in average attendance. Regarding this question in connection with its effect upon the finances of this district, I cannot contemplate the possibility of such a step without serious apprehension. The revenue of the Grey Board from capitation is at present £4,844 per annum. The alteration of the entrance-age to six would reduce our revenue to the extent of £750, and the proposal of the Government to take off 5s. of capitation would deprive us of £250—a total of £1,000, or more than one-fifth of our revenue. The Board has lately reduced the salaries of teachers fully 10 per cent.; and the list of salaries herewith enclosed will, I think, show you that a further reduction is quite an impossibility. In view of the evident necessity for retrenchment, I regard the proposal of the Government as moderate and reasonable, provided they be accompanied by such changes as would prevent a very unfair inequality of effect upon different districts. Some districts could meet the difficulty by a very moderate degree of retrenchment. The Grey District, and possibly some others similar to it, would be virtually blotted out. In connection with this I will defer my suggestions until I reply to query 3.

Reply to Query No. 2.—I cannot express a very favourable opinion as to the payment of fees for the higher or any standards. One great objection to fees is that if payable at short intervals their collection entails both trouble and annoyance to the teacher. Their non-payment is also likely to cause disagreement between teacher and parent, and possibly undue harshness to the scholar. I

certainly think that if fees be levied the teacher should be relieved from all trouble and responsibility in connection with them. As to the effect of the institution of fees in this district I can only speculate. In the country schools I feel sure that very few would attend after passing the maximum standard prescribed by the Government, and consequently any estimate of the revenue derivable from that source would be very fallacious. Possibly a better plan would be to give the householders in a school district the power to decide by vote as to whether they would submit to the levying of a tax for the support of the upper standards, and for other school purposes.

Answer to Query No. 3.—The present juncture seems to me to be favourable to very thorough dealing with educational matters, so as, first, to prevent inequality of effect in connection with reduction of income, and, secondly, to provide for a more economical administration of the system. Both results would, I think, be secured by the abolishment to a great extent of local government, and the direct contact of the schools with the department or something representing the department. I would therefore suggest the abolishment of Education Boards, accompanied by a considerable limitation of the powers of Committees. The latter provision would be absolutely indispensable in connection with so radical a change, or disaster would ensue. At the same time the areas of school districts should be considerably enlarged.

Other good effects which would follow from these changes, and which alone would justify their adoption, are—first, that payments to teachers of the same class throughout the colony would be equalised; and, secondly, that facilities for the promotion of deserving teachers would be greater. With the experience of a neighbouring colony before us, it can hardly be considered desirable that the educational system of New Zealand should be placed under the sole charge of a political Minister. Possibly the division of the colony into electoral districts identical with the present education districts, the smaller districts sending one member and the larger not more than three members to a central body, sitting periodically (quarterly or half-yearly), at a place which need not always be the same, would be as safe a plan as could be adopted. The Chairman should be paid, and should occupy during the recess of the legislative body the position at present occupied by the Minister. The teaching profession to be represented on the proposed Board by one or two persons specially qualified, who would be chosen by the votes of the members elected by the various districts.

Answer to Query No. 4.—On the whole, I consider the amended Syllabus to be satisfactory. I beg to suggest the following alterations: (1.) The creation of a Seventh-pass Standard; the standard referred to in section 90 of the Act, subsection (4), to be the Fifth Standard. (2.) That it be made compulsory to have two reading-books in use in addition to the ordinary reader; the additional books to be a geographical and an historical reader. (3.) The geography of all standards to be a class subject. (4.) Clause 6 of the standard regulations to be altered to the extent of allowing all pupils to be considered "excepted" who have not been present half the number of times of assembling of the school, from the commencement of the school-year to the end of the month previous to the examination. (5.) Drawing to be made a class subject in the country schools. (6.) The historical work for Standard III. not to be too strictly defined, and their acquaintance with history to be gained more by the reading of short stories from history.

As I am just at present busily engaged with the annual examination of our schools, I am compelled to reply rather hurriedly to your circular; but I hope that some portion of my reply may be of service.

I have, &c.,

E. T. Robinson.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Salary List for the Quarter ending 30th September, 1887.

School.	Average Attendance for Quarter ending 30th June.	Position of Teacher in School.	Annual Salary. £	s.	d.	School.	Average Attendance for Quarter ending 30th June.	Position of Teacher in School.	Annual Salary. £	s.	d.
Kynnersley	21	T.	90	0	0	Marsden	18	T.	100	0	0
Totara Flat.. ..	25	T.	108	0	0	Greymouth ..	484	H.T.	330	0	0
Orwell Creek ..	20	T.	100	0	0			A.T.	175	0	0
Ahaura	23	T.	90	0	0			A.T.	140	0	0
Hatters	76	H.T.	155	0	0			A.T.	250	0	0
		A.T.	100	0	0			H.M.	200	0	0
		P.T.	20	0	0			P.T.	55	0	0
Red Jack's	15	T.	90	0	0			P.T.	45	0	0
Notown	34	H.T.	126	0	0			P.T.	45	0	0
		P.T.	25	0	0			P.T.	30	0	0
Brunnerton	167	H.T.	200	0	0			P.T.	30	0	0
		A.T.	90	0	0			P.T.	25	0	0
		J.A.T.	70	0	0			P.T.	20	0	0
		P.T.	25	0	0			P.T.	25	0	0
		P.T.	25	0	0			P.T.	20	0	0
Dobson	36	H.T.	150	0	0			P.T.	20	0	0
		T.	100	0	0			P.T.	20	0	0
		P.T.	25	0	0	Paroa	59	H.T.	135	0	0
		P.T.	25	0	0			A.T.	70	0	0
Maori Gully ..	25	T.	90	0	0	Westbrook ..	25	T.	117	0	0
Dunganville ..	50	H.T.	135	0	0	Greenstone ..	21	T.	108	0	0
		A.T.	70	0	0	Teremakau ..	8	T.	50	0	0
Cobden	74	H.T.	150	0	0	Lake Brunner ..	4	T.	18	0	0
		A.T.	60	0	0	Blackball	7	T.	28	0	0

Mr. J. GAMMELL to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Eleutheria, Queenstown, 21st November, 1887.

In reply to your circular letter of the 10th instant, I have the honour to inform you that I am no longer Inspector of Schools, having recently resigned my appointment under the Southland Board. After five years of unintermitted work, I felt the strong necessity of a respite. The Board generously allowed me a twelvemonths' holiday on half-pay, but at the end of six months I deemed it best to terminate the engagement.

My deep interest in the education question, however, is not at all diminished, and I have thought it might not be unacceptable to your Committee if I put my thoughts on some points connected with it before you, although I no longer hold an official position. I will therefore make some remarks, suggested by my experience, on the topics indicated in your letter, taking the fourth point first.

I have long been of opinion that a radical change is required in the mode of testing the efficiency of our schools. As you are aware, the present method of ascertaining the quality of the teaching in any school is by an annual examination conducted by the Inspector, who, in regard to the school, is altogether an outsider, so to speak. The effect of this method is, in my judgment, altogether bad: it leads to "cram," and, in the very nature of things, must always lead to "cram." The teacher naturally works for the examination, the children throughout the year are thinking of, and dreading, the examination; both parties are working under pressure, both parties are thinking of something else than the diffusion or acquisition of knowledge. The love of learning for its own sake is not awakened among the scholars; what is learnt is not mentally digested, but simply exists as lumps of facts in the mental stomach of the scholar, unappropriated by the system; and generally a spirit of hurry and want of reflection is set up by the present method, which is fatal to the acquisition of the highest results of education.

That the system is a bad one appears also from the fact that it lays down one rule and one measure for all children, quick and slow alike, and ignores the thousand varieties of mind that exist among children as amongst adults. All are required to learn the same amount in the twelvemonth—the slow must be driven, the quick must be held back, in order that the bedstead of Procrustes may fit them all. And when we remember that, just as amid the innumerable leaves of the forest there are probably no two leaves exactly alike in shape and size, so there are no two minds of exactly the same capacity and aptitude, it becomes, I think, apparent at once what an irrational system our present one is.

Further, by the present system the promotion of a child from one class to a higher one depends on his passing the Inspector's examination. But at the best this is a very imperfect test. It consists of a few questions, and, if a child fails to answer most of these, he is remanded to his old class for another year. Now, it may happen both that a child fit to be promoted cannot answer many of those particular questions, and also that another scholar may be able to answer these questions by a sort of fluke, and yet not be at all fit for the work of the higher class. The head-teacher, who has seen what the child has done during every day of the past year, is the fittest person to determine whether he should be promoted or not, and not the Inspector, who has such scanty materials on which to base his judgment. I think every Inspector and every head-teacher is at present well aware of this; and if a teacher is not fit to be intrusted with the power of promotion he is not fit for his post.

The department, aware of the many evils that attach to the examination system, has recently attempted to neutralise them. But, in my judgment, it is useless to expect any but the present evils as long as the examination system exists at all. Nothing but the complete abolition of the Inspector's annual examination will remove the evils and establish healthy education in New Zealand. We are told that we ought not to be influenced too much in our judgment of a school by the result of the examination; but, then, why go through such an elaborate process if little or no significance is to be attached to the result? Besides, it is at present almost the only test we have, and so necessarily determines the consideration in which a school and its teacher are held. An examination also is by its very nature such an imperious thing that those who have to undergo it, and those whose standing in their profession and whose very bread-and-butter will be affected by it, cannot but give it the chief place in their thought, whatever exhortations to disregard it may be addressed to them. As well might you tell people to swallow strychnine, but on no account allow it to poison them, as subject them to an examination, but tell them not to think about it. There is only one remedy for the evils I have referred to, and that is the utter abolition of the examination system. Were this done "cram" would at once cease, we should hear no more of the excessive requirements of the syllabus, children and teachers alike would be relieved from pressure, would work naturally, the sense of having insurmountable difficulties to overcome would be removed, and a pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake would be awakened amongst the children. To learn and to teach are both delightful exercises when pursued under natural conditions, and school life to teachers and scholars alike ought to be a happy life, and would be so here in New Zealand at present were it not for the torturing ordeal which is ever before the minds of both. Abolish this, and you will secure in your schools, not only knowledge, but wisdom; your scholars will learn how to think as well as how to remember; and, however small may be their attainments, what they know they will know thoroughly, and will have attained the one great boon of intellectual culture.

I am bound, however, after what I have said, to answer this question, How is the efficiency of a school to be tested if the Inspector's annual examination be abolished? A test we must have, people will say, and a bad test if we cannot get a good one: and I shall doubtless be asked what method I propose to substitute for the present one. I reply, in the first place, that, so strong is my belief in the evils of the present system, so entirely, in my judgment, does it neutralise the blessings that our education system was meant to confer upon us, so completely do we sacrifice the education

to the test, the substance to the method of weighing it, that I would rather see no test at all than the continuance of the present one. However, I believe that there need be no difficulty in ascertaining whether teachers are doing their duty wisely, diligently, and successfully, or not. At present the Inspector's time is almost entirely consumed in conducting examinations and assessing examination papers. From this drudgery he would be entirely relieved if the annual examination were abolished, and his whole time could then be given to visiting schools and making himself acquainted with teachers and their methods. He would be able to make, not one, but many unannounced visits to each school in the course of the year, and to stay at each visit, not an hour or so, but a whole day, or even a whole week if necessary. Further, he could himself take one or more classes at each school in the lesson of the day, and by his questions ascertain what the children knew and what was the degree of their intelligence, whilst at the same time he could be incidentally showing to the teachers the best methods of giving the lesson. The Inspector would thus come to have in course of time a most thorough knowledge of the abilities and diligence of each of the teachers in his district, and, if the promotions and appointments of the Board were made solely on his recommendation, would have great opportunities of rewarding diligent and successful teachers; whilst these latter, knowing that promotion depended on their securing the good opinion of the Inspector, would be likely to work hard to achieve this result.

1. As to the payment of fees for higher standards, I am unfavourable to it; I think the amount saved would be very small, and that the plan would work injuriously on the progress of the children. If payment were made for instruction in Standard V. and Standard VI. only—and I presume none would wish to go lower than Standard V. in requiring payment—I find, by referring to my reports for 1884 and 1885, that the percentage of paying scholars out of the whole number in attendance at the schools in those years would have been 4·4 and 4·6 respectively. Further, if the principle of payment for these higher standards were adopted, it would often be to the interest of the teacher that the children of the lower classes should not make progress; and even parents might sometimes not be unwilling to acquiesce in the low classification of their children. Besides, it would create two different orders of pupils in the school, a condition of things not at all desirable. On very many grounds, therefore, I think this suggestion should not be entertained.

2. With respect to your first point, I see no objection at all to raising the school age one year, and making school life begin at six years of age instead of five; I do not think it would affect the future progress of the child injuriously at all. Even more, it seems to me undesirable that children should be subjected to the confinement of school life at so early an age as the present.

I have, &c.,
JOHN GAMMELL, B.A. (Lond.),
Late Inspector of Schools for Southland.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. W. TAYLOR to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Education Office, Dunedin, 3rd December, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your circular of the 10th November. In reply, I have to state that,—

1. I see no serious objection to raising the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid to six years. The early age at which many children are withdrawn from school is against raising it to seven years.

2. I do not approve of the payment of fees for any standard except Standard VII. Pupils belonging to this class ought to pay an amount sufficient to defray the cost of their extra tuition.

3. In respect of school-buildings, a considerable saving might be effected. Schools are sometimes erected where there is no absolute need for them, and occasionally buildings are pulled down that would last for years, in order to give place to new ones. I know of no way of inducing economy in the direction of buildings but by requiring those who demand them to pay a proportion of their cost.

4. I am in favour of excluding history from the programme of studies for Standard III.; of limiting the pass-subjects to reading and explanation, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, and grammar, and of reducing the number of class subjects.

I have, &c.,
WM. TAYLOR,
Inspector of Schools, Otago.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. P. GOYEN to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Education Office, Dunedin, 2nd December, 1887

Referring to your circular of the 10th ultimo, I have the honour to reply,—

1. The school environment is in every way so much more educative than the home environment of most of the children attending the public schools, that it would, in my view, be a serious mistake to raise the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid.

2. I am opposed to the payment of fees in the higher standards.

3. The Syllabus is, on the whole, an excellent one, and I should regret to see any radical change made in it. I should like to see geography made a class-subject throughout, and history excised from Standard III. As Standard I. is supposed to know nothing about division, I am of opinion that the "relative values and chief aliquot parts of current English coins, and the relative lengths of the yard, foot, and inch," should be excised from the arithmetic of that standard.

In this connection, I would like to suggest, too, that in Regulation 15, as to inspection, the words "except in the two highest standards the problems must be such as to require the application of only one principle," should be expunged. If a principle means an operation—addition, multiplication, subtraction, or division—and a problem involving one principle is suitable for Standard II., it seems obvious that a problem involving only one principle is too simple for Standard IV. The restriction is a mischievous one, and wholly opposed to the healthy general tenour of the regulations. Our aim ought to be to train the children to reason, and to qualify them to do the arithmetic of business life, and not to give them the mere stamp of a standard pass. The restriction I am referring to may be in the interest of the teachers, but it is certainly opposed to that of the children.

I have, &c.,

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington. P. Goyen.

Mr. W. Hill to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Education Office, Napier, 14th December, 1887.

I have already replied to you by telegram, stating briefly my opinion on the four points named in your letter, and promising, if required, fuller particulars on my return to Napier. In compliance with my promise and with the request contained in your letter of the 21st ultimo, I beg to submit the following explanations and suggestions for the information of your Committee:—

The position stands thus: Your circular-letter dated the 10th ultimo asks for information or suggestions on the following four points: (1.) As to the advisability of raising the school-age, upon which capitation payments are now made. (2.) As to payment of fees by pupils for the higher standards. (3.) For suggestions as to the more economical working of the Education Act. (4.) Whether it is possible to suggest alterations likely to improve the present standard Syllabus.

My telegram addressed to you from Te Wairoa, in answer to the above queries, stated, (1.) That the least damaging modification of the present system would be to raise the commencing-age for attendance at school to seven years. (2.) That payment of fees would be disastrous to the education system if charged during the standard period, but that fees to the extent of the present capitation might be charged to parents on account of children after passing the Sixth Standard. (3.) That the first suggestion would cause most economy, greater efficiency, especially in country schools, and least injury to the education system. (4.) That education, to be effective, must be adaptive. That it is not so at present, the subjects being too many and producing superficiality; and, further, that the subjects as now taught are not adapted to the special needs and requirements of districts.

I now proceed to deal with each of the foregoing replies in greater detail:—

1. *As to raising the School-age.*—My suggestion as to raising the school-age from five to seven years when children may be admitted into the public schools is by no means a new one with me. I have for years past maintained, as my annual reports to the Hawke's Bay Board of Education will testify, that much injury is done to education by this practice of admitting young children of five years of age into the schools, and especially into the smaller country ones. In this education district the small schools are carried on each in a single room, and managed by one teacher—a lady teacher where possible. Now, the organization of a small school is a more difficult problem than the organization of a large one, that is, if the school is to be efficiently worked. In the small school the teacher, as a rule, has the same number of standards as in the largest schools; besides, the difficulties of the former are increased by the addition of, say, 40 per cent. of children either too young or too backward for presentation in standards. In the large schools the infants constitute a department by themselves under special teachers. In all cases where a single teacher is engaged it becomes next to impossible for infants to be instructed even fairly well, seeing that the teacher must centre his energies upon the preparation of his standard pupils, on the efficient preparation of whom he is judged by his Committee, parents, and perhaps the Inspector. But, assuming that a teacher can find time to give instruction to his infant-pupils, the kind of teaching is special, and entirely different from that required for the preparation of standard children. The carrying-on of the former is detrimental to progress in the latter; hence the infants or the standard children must be in the main neglected if they are required to be instructed in the same room. All teachers of experience are aware of this fact; hence it happens that the lowest class in a country school is neglected for more important work, and the little ones do pretty much as they please; the result being that bad habits are formed—habits of inattention, indifference, and carelessness, and these habits influence for the worse, both in school and out of it, the after-lives of the children. My experience is that young children are admitted into the country schools not because they are wanted, but as a kind of padding. Their attendance causes an increase in the salary of the teacher, and the trouble they cause is a small matter compared with the loss of salary which would ensue were such children debarred from attendance at school. In schools where a separate department for infants is provided, I believe also that the standard-work of whatever kind would be improved were children excluded until the age of seven. The physical life is first in importance in the life of man, and the mental training of children can well be left until the body has acquired strength. Our infant schools do not cause children to pass the standards at an earlier age, nor, as far as my experience goes, do they produce anything higher than the making of mud-pies, such as were made before the establishment of nurseries for infants. My opinion on this question of infant-training is supported by that of some of the best infants' teachers in my district, and my wife, who is an English-trained infants' mistress, and for years had charge of the infants' department in Christchurch East school, is also of a similar opinion. Were children excluded as suggested, I believe that the standards would be passed at an earlier age than at present, and that the character of the instruction in all the schools would be greatly improved.

2. *As to the Payment of Fees.*—The greatest danger to education and to the successful issue

of the education scheme of this country would be the introduction of school-fees. My experience extends to the collection of school-fees in elementary schools in England, and it is not a happy one. To me the question of education is one as to the duty of the State to educate its future citizens, irrespective of the ability of parent or child to pay for the cost of such preparation. The State desires good citizens, and it adopts a certain course in the training of children having this end in view. The course adopted is no doubt beneficial to the children, but the benefit to the State is relatively as great as the benefit to the children. Professor Leone Levi has well said, that "every child left to a career of crime costs the State £1,000, whilst every child educated to good behaviour and labour is worth to the State at the very lowest estimate £2,000." If these statements are true, and I have no doubt whatever in my own mind that they are, it is the essence of unwisdom to demand a school-fee, when by so doing many children might be kept from attending school in consequence of the inability of parents to pay the fees demanded. In my opinion, there is no greater self-sacrifice made than by that parent who foregoes the weekly earnings of a few shillings from his children, rather than they should be kept from school. Poor parents—and they are many indeed—who sacrifice the weekly earnings of their children pay by so doing a large school-fee, and they should be encouraged to do so, especially when it is remembered that the State is so much benefited thereby. This argument will suffice to show that I think it would be unwise to exclude children who have passed the Sixth Standard from attending a public school. In central districts, where high schools are established, arrangements might be made to bring into harmony the working of the primary and secondary schools, so that children after passing the Sixth Standard might be allowed to attend at the high school on payment of a capitation fee of £4 or at the most £5 per annum. Some of the best schools in England at the present time are being worked on this plan of grading. Economically and educationally the results would be beneficial to the country.

3. *As to the more Economical Working of the Education Act.*—I have already pointed out the direction in which it is possible to practice the greatest economies in our education system. I do not think that a four pounds' capitation allowance is too much to pay for the education of children, at least, if the education is to be worth the having. Good wages command good men, and with fair administration it is possible to pay good salaries, and to meet all ordinary demands of maintenance on a capitation allowance of £4, estimated on the average attendance. During the past nine years this education district has paid good salaries, and has also been able to set aside some thousands of pounds out of its school fund for the erection of school-buildings. The cost of administration with a school population of nearly six thousand children is slightly less than it was nine years ago, when there were not two thousand children in the district. Both teachers and Committees have experienced the benefit of the constantly-diminishing administrative cost, and even if the children below the age of seven years were excluded the effect upon teachers' salaries would be scarcely perceptible. The only real inconvenience would be the temporary loss of employment by a few of the junior teachers. I say "temporary loss of employment," because I believe all the available places in the schools would soon be occupied by children who ought now to be attending school, but who do not.

4. *Suggested Alterations likely to improve the present Standard Syllabus.*—I have already set forth as a fundamental principle in education "that, in order to be effective, education must be adaptive." This aspect of the question is entirely disregarded in our standard Syllabus, because it requires that every child, no matter what his environment may be, must be required to produce the same characteristic results before he can receive the official mark of "pass" from an Inspector of Schools. Time after time I have ventured to direct attention to the utter uselessness of demanding the same kind of preparation from children whose local surroundings are so unlike, and whose lives will be spent under conditions closely allied to their surroundings. The children in our towns, in the country, and in the bush districts have little or nothing in common. They think differently, live differently, and act differently from one another; but the aim of the Syllabus is to make them all think the same things at the same time. What is education for, but a preparation for the fulfilment of duty; and how can this preparation be successfully accomplished unless adaptation to industrial needs and local surroundings be the stepping-stones to the preparation? To me it is just as reasonable to affirm that wheat of similar kind and quality could be grown on all lands, as to affirm that the same mental products are obtainable from all children alike. No doubt equal, or nearly equal, relative mental products are obtainable from all children, but there is a wide distinction to be drawn between "similar mental products" and "equal relative mental products:" the latter produces differentiation and adaptation, the former uniformity. Adaptation conforms to natural laws, uniformity is a device of officialism for the sake of ease and convenience. I have for many years given special attention to the study of this important aspect of the education question, and I have no hesitation in saying that education would have been far more efficient and less superficial than it now is in my district had the subjects of instruction been limited and made adaptive to the needs of districts. So long ago as the year 1880 I addressed the Education Board of this district on this very aspect of the standard Syllabus, and just before the adoption of the new standard regulations in 1885 (see E.–1c, 1885, p. 16) I addressed the Inspector-General of Schools on the same question. But the new standard Syllabus has intensified the "uniformity craze" in the schools. At least, this is my experience. With a view to making clearer my opinions on this vital question as to the kind and character of the instruction which ought to be pursued in the public schools, I venture to quote from my report to the Education Board for the year 1880, and to which reference has already been made. Referring to the need of making the instruction bear as much as possible upon the practical aspect of life, I say, "There are three aspects of life in this district—town, country, bush; and the condition of the people in each of these districts is different from the other two: the town from the country, the country from the bush, and also the bush-aspect of life is farther removed from the town than from the country. As the aspects are different so are the conceptions of the people. The mode of life, the surroundings, the pursuits of the people in the bush have little in common with the

mode of life, the surroundings, and the pursuit of the people in the town; and it seems only natural to infer that the education of the children should be built on these different aspects of living. The children cannot conceive the facts of English history, they cannot conceive the outside facts of political geography, nor can they conceive the definitions of English grammar." . . . . . And will such mental facts assist in making the children better citizens, better mechanics, better artisans and farmers? . . . . I have a high opinion of the value of history, geography, and grammar of the right sort and rightly pursued, but I think there are many subjects of more importance to the happiness of children and to the prosperity of this district which might be substituted in the school curriculum. . . . . The future bushman, ploughman, and mechanic are provided with the same educational tools to perform entirely different functions in life, with the result that words have become an equivalent for ideas, memory for mind, and instruction for education."

The education of children, if it is to be worth anything at all, must be of two kinds, general and special. After the training of the organs of sensation—sight, feeling, taste, smell, sound—there are only two school-subjects which are common and needful for all children, whether living in town, country, or bush. These two subjects are reading and writing. Like air and water, they are needful for all our children, reading and writing being the pictorial or objective means of conveying thoughts and facts without the employment of vocal sounds. As soon, therefore, as these arts have been fully mastered, specialisation in education really begins—or, rather, it should begin, but does not. It is for this reason that I am not in favour of the present standard Syllabus of instruction. Whilst I believe in Government control in the matter of public education, it is not necessary to have Chinese uniformity with it. The Central Government should formulate by generalisations, but local government should administer and adapt to the special needs of districts. I am totally opposed to any limit being put upon what children may learn, but I am equally opposed to a Central Government saying what children shall learn. The work which is asked to be accomplished under the "revised standards" can be done by children, but it is at the expense of superficiality, and, not being adaptive, the results cannot be permanent. The carrying-out of the new standard regulations has proved disastrous in a number of schools in this district during the year just closing. Some of the schools are unable to take up all the class subjects, but the work in the pass subjects has been well prepared. According to the regulations, none of the pupils can pass, simply because the class subjects have not been taught, and children cannot proceed to a higher standard simply because the class subjects are not taught. In these same schools excellent results are obtained in what are known as "additional subjects." The teachers are capable, satisfactory progress has been made during the year, but the progress has not been according to stereotyped departmental requirements. Had I the power of doing so without breaking the standard regulations, several hundred children would have passed to a higher standard who are now kept back simply because class subjects like history and elementary science have not been prepared. Any one acquainted with our small country and bush schools must know the utter absurdity of demanding so many subjects from children who are instructed under difficulties a hundred times greater than are to be met with in our larger schools; and, were liberty of choice in the matter of school-subjects left in the hands of School Committees and Education Boards, I am satisfied that the school-work would be far better than it is, and that the teaching would be in the direction of adapting the work to the special needs of districts. All that is required to make our education system a great blessing to this country is to prepare an adapted and differentiated standard Syllabus of instruction on the lines indicated above. The choice of subjects other than reading and writing could then be left in the hands of School Committees and Education Boards, and an impetus would be given to the introduction of technical instruction into the schools, which it is impossible to attempt with any hope of success at the present time. We want a feasible scheme of instruction, not based upon what England does or upon what France does or would like to do, but upon what we ourselves ought to do under the varying conditions of life in this country, so as to produce industrious, intelligent, and hardy citizens, who will look upon the colony as their home and their fatherland.

I have, &c.,

W. Hill, B.A., F.G.S.,

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee. Inspector of Schools.

Mr. John S. Goodwin to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Auckland, 5th December, 1887.

I have the honour, in reply to your circular of the 10th November, *re* the working of our Education Act, to offer the following remarks:—

1. I am of opinion that the age upon which the capitation grant is paid might be raised to six years without being productive of harm educationally. I consider that children below that age are better at home engaged in healthful play than cooped up within the walls of a schoolroom: it might be different were it possible to establish throughout the colony infant schools in the charge of those who, having made that branch their special study, are competent to conduct these schools upon something akin to the Kindergarten system.

2. The payment of fees for instruction in the higher standards would destroy the integrity of our existing system. If fees were chargeable, parents would probably wish to prescribe the course of study to be pursued in those standards, and great diversity of opinion upon that subject would most likely ensue; there would be also, I believe, great difficulty in collecting fees.

3. So far as I am aware, the working of the Education Act in this (Auckland) district is attended with as little expense as is possible, bearing in mind the fact that the Board has endeavoured to place education within the reach of almost every settler in our thinly-populated district. The large number of small and half-time schools established in remote places has no doubt been a very heavy drain upon the resources of the Board. The salaries of teachers and Inspectors are, I believe, lower than those paid for similar services in other parts of the colony.

4. The Syllabus, reasonably interpreted, demands no more than can be performed by schools with two or more teachers. It presses heavily, however, upon small and half-time schools, of which there are many in the Auckland District. If the regulations relating to the examination of schools permitted some discretionary power to Inspectors to reduce the number of subjects not absolutely essential, I think some good might be done, and teachers in small schools would cease to strive after what is practically unattainable in their schools as at present constituted, and more thorough work would, I think, be done on the whole. I am, &c.,

JOHN S. GOODWIN,
Inspector of Schools.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

REPLIES OF EDUCATION BOARDS TO CIRCULAR ON PAGE 24.

Mr. J. SMITH to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

Hokitika, 23rd November, 1887.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that a special meeting of this Board was held this day, to take into consideration the questions submitted in your circular of the 10th November, and to lay before you the following resolutions agreed to by the Board:—

1. "That this Board, having considered paragraph No. 1 of the Chairman's circular, cannot recommend the raising of the age upon which capitation is paid, as such a course would seriously reduce the already limited income of the Board."

2. "That this Board disapproves of the proposal to charge fees for admission to Standards V. and VI., on the following grounds: (*a.*) That to do so would be tantamount to destroying one of the first principles of the New Zealand education system, which should be 'free, secular, and compulsory.' (*b.*) That the charging of fees for the upper standards would be highly unfair to the poorer classes, the majority of whom would be virtually shut out from the higher standards, and consequently debarred from competition for scholarships. (*c.*) That the alteration would cause a serious reduction in the Boards' incomes, and consequently injuriously affect the whole system of education."

3. In reply to question 3 the Board would suggest that power might be given to School Committees to levy a small rate—not to exceed 1s. per child—on the parents, for the maintenance and cleaning of schools; no parent to pay this rate for more than three children.

4. "This Board is of opinion that the present Syllabus is too comprehensive for a system of free primary education; and suggests that the following subjects only should be compulsory, namely, reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and composition, up to and including the Fourth Standard; with the outlines of geography for boys, and domestic economy for girls, in the higher standards; and that all other subjects should be 'class' subjects. That special certificates of competency to teach music and drawing should be issued to persons who shall satisfy the department (by undergoing examination or otherwise) of their ability to give efficient instruction on those subjects to the full extent required by the Syllabus."

I have, &c.,
JOHN SMITH, Secretary.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman of Education Committee.

Mr. G. VEALE to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

Education Office, New Plymouth, 24th November, 1887.

SIR,—

In reply to your letter of the 10th instant, requesting an expression of opinion from this Board regarding the subject-matter of your letter, I have the honour to append hereto a series of resolutions, in answer to the various questions submitted, passed by the Board on the 23rd instant.

I have, &c.,
G. VEALE, Secretary.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Resolutions passed by the Taranaki Education Board in answer to Questions submitted by the Chairman, Education Committee.

1. "THAT, if the House of Representatives is determined to reduce the capitation grant, the Board is of opinion that by increasing the school-age to six years the least injury will be done to the cause of education in this district."

2. "The Board is of opinion that no special charge be made for the higher standards; but, if it is absolutely necessary to raise money directly for education, the Board considers it would be preferable to charge a small fee on all standards."

3. Regarding this question the Board has no suggestion to make.

4. "That the Board is not in a position to offer any suggestion at present, but considers that considerable modifications should be made in the Syllabus."

Mr. A. A. BROWNE to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

Wanganui, 30th November, 1887.

SIR,—

I have the honour, by direction of the Board, to inform you that I placed your circular letter of the 10th instant before them at yesterday's meeting, and I am now directed to reply as follows:—

1. This Board is of opinion that the present plan of paying capitation for all children between the ages of five and fifteen should be maintained if the public funds permitted, but, recognising the

necessity for a reduction in the educational vote, considers the proposal to raise the age to six years as the most advisable course in all thickly-populated centres. This Board, however, desires to point out that in the Wanganui Education District the greater number of their schools are situated in the country, and the proposed reduction will press very heavily on those schools. While being anxious to assist the Government in bringing about the economy necessary, they trust the expressed intention of assisting the country schools will be given effect to in a liberal sense, by a differential capitation for town and country scholars.

2. The Board considers this question is covered by the answer to question 1.

3. The Board has not any suggestions to make.

4. The Board will refer this matter to its Inspector, and will apprise you of the result. (The Inspector is at present absent.)

I have, &c.,

A. A. Browne, Secretary.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. D. Pryde to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Education Office, Dunedin, 18th November, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of date 10th current, which was laid before the Board at its meeting yesterday, when I was directed to reply to the several questions contained therein, as follow, viz.,—

(1) The Board declines to express an opinion on this point.

(2.) The Board is opposed to the payment of fees for higher standards.

(3) and (4.) These questions are answered already by the report of Board's Special Committee (copy of report enclosed).

I have, &c.,

D. Pryde, Secretary.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

Extracts from Report of Committee appointed by Otago Education Board to inquire into the Standards of Education.

The principle pervading the returns is that this and all other matters ought to be determined with controlling reference to the condition and capacity of children at school, and their preparation for the life that is before them; and from this point of view the testimonies combine with remarkable fulness in decisive condemnation of the existing Syllabus, especially as involving an amount of prescribed task-work, and a quality of prescribed task-work that is fitted to repress the individuality of the teacher, and to overstrain the minds of pupils with toil that is fitted rather to retard than to forward the healthful growth of the mind, and that can hardly fail to be detrimental to the vigorous growth of the body.

James Macgregor, D.D., Convener.

Selection No. 1.—With reading, writing, elementary drawing, and vocal music, arithmetic, and composition, and for girls, domestic economy and needlework, as the absolutely-essential subjects, and history, geography, and grammar by rule as subsidiary subjects, and treated as such at examination, the schools of the colony would be doing far more really good work for the bread-winners and housekeepers of the future than is at present being accomplished.

Selection No. 2.—Chinese uniformity is the recognised order of the day, and even Inspectors are not allowed to deviate from the lines laid down by the Government, however necessary the Inspectors may deem it desirable to do so. The future bushman, ploughman, mechanic, merchant, schoolmaster, and professor are provided in the Government workshops with exactly the same kinds of tools, to perform entirely different functions in life, with the result that we find words are now an equivalent for ideas, memory for mind, and instruction for education. . . . . To me the duty of the Government is clear. It should insist upon all children being prepared for citizenship, but it should throw the onus of preparation upon the counties and boroughs. At once we should have adaptation and differentiation in education. By means of Inspectors the Government should know what districts are doing in the way of advancing education; but it should not insist upon this subject or upon that one being taught to the exclusion of everything else. I am opposed to any limit being put upon what children may learn, so long as there is no age-clause in operation when each standard must be passed, and no payment by results. I believe that the powers of children in the acquisition of knowledge are very great, if the subjects they are permitted to learn are adapted to their mental tastes, which, by the way, is simply specialisation. I do think, however, that the present standard subjects are too numerous to compass thoroughly in the short space of 950 hours, which is the actual school-time between one standard examination and another, and that much better work would be done by having a Seventh and even an Eighth Standard, and by an examination in special subjects one year and in general subjects the next year, and so on, in all standards higher than the Second. Examinations would then become more real on the part of the Inspectors, and less harassing and detrimental to the children. What we do want is a meeting of educationists to draw up a feasible scheme, not based upon what England does or upon what Victoria would like to do, but upon what we ourselves ought to do under the varying conditions of life in New Zealand so as to produce earnest, intelligent, and industrious citizens, and men who will love and look upon the colony as their fatherland.

Selection 3.—First, as regards present Syllabus. That drawing, geography, and grammar be removed from the list of pass subjects and made class subjects; second, that the arithmetic in all standards be considerably lessened, both in extent and in difficulty, so that ability to work purely

mechanical sums may be sufficient to secure a pass; third, that history be removed entirely from the Third-Standard work, and that science be made an additional subject; fourth, that more freedom be allowed to teachers in grouping classes, and that no more than two additional subjects be required (at least, in the case of country schools); and that amongst these additional subjects mathematics and Latin be included.

Selection 4.—Reading, writing, arithmetic, and English composition will thus form the important subjects in a rational Syllabus. The highest importance ought to be attached to intelligent reading, and this might very well be done by lessening the requirements in arithmetic, which appear to be too high in the New Zealand Code. So much stress is laid on the ability to solve problems in arithmetic that in a number of schools one and a half hours per day are devoted to this subject, often, doubtless, with the result that the brain is overworked. Geography ought to be made a class subject and should not be taught under the Fourth Standard. The requirements in history for the Third Standard are ridiculously extensive. Formal grammar ought to be made a class subject, and greater importance ought to be attached to English composition. Grammar ought to follow composition and not precede it. Elementary science, as at present taught, is perfectly useless. In the most of cases it is taught like a literary subject, and not experimentally, and therefore degenerates into mere cram.

Selection 5.—I consider that the powers of memory should not be over-taxed by the necessity of keeping up the dates, names, and special facts of history; as also minute details of places, relative positions, and other particulars required by a constant repetition of geography, in order to pass at the examination. I consider this a serious mistake, and, from my experience of about thirty years, I venture to say such crucial taxation of memory is bordering on a system of torture.

Selection 6.—The present system may tend to the development of a phase of skill in cramming that may be destructive to the exercise of that intelligence necessary to be exercised in determining how and in what quantity and form instruction can be best imparted to the young plants, with a view to their success in after life. What I think should be more aimed at than is at present is to provide our schools with well-trained, intelligent teachers, who are able to discriminate and weigh the capabilities of their scholars, and who should be allowed far more exercise of their own individuality in the management of the schools under their charge, and who, from their daily careful study of the mental and physical constitutions of their scholars, ought to be the best judges of the amount and kind of work most suitable and expedient in each case, and that is likely to prove most successful and useful in after life. This leads me to express my conviction that the system of classification of teachers adopted by the Inspector-General is not calculated to encourage the production of the best workmen.

Mr. Jno. Neill to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Office of the Southland Board of Education,
Invercargill, 5th December, 1887.

Sir,—

I have the honour, by direction of this Board, to inform you that your circular of date 10th November last, was carefully considered at its last meeting held on the 2nd instant, when the following resolutions were adopted:—

1. "That, in the opinion of this Board, it is not desirable to raise the school-age until all other methods of reducing the expenditure on education have been fully considered and tried; as, among other reasons, it will have the effect of closing a large number of small schools throughout the colony."

2. "That this Board is of opinion that it is undesirable to impose any fees for the higher standards."

3. "That, in the opinion of this Board, it is desirable to amend the Education Act in the following directions: (*a.*) To abolish the present statutory capitation grant. (*b.*) To empower the Governor in Council to make regulations for fixing the salaries, bonuses, and rent-allowances payable to teachers throughout the colony, based upon the average attendance at each school, and for fixing the allowances payable to School Committees upon a like basis, such last-mentioned allowances to be upon a graduated scale, the amount per pupil in average attendance being largest in the case of the smallest schools, and becoming less as the average increases. (*c.*) That a sum for the expenses of Education Boards, for scholarships and contingencies, based upon actual requirements, be annually voted by Parliament. (*d.*) That a sum equal to the amount of the teachers' salaries, bonuses, rent-allowances, School Committees' allowances, Boards' expenses, scholarships, and contingencies, for each month be paid to the respective Boards for application to the proper purposes."

4. "That this Board does not see its way to suggest any alteration of the Syllabus with a view to its improvement."

I am further directed to inform you that, in the opinion of this Board, it is undesirable that any amalgamation of the present Education Boards should take place.

For the information of your Committee, I enclose a report of the discussion which took place in reference to the foregoing resolutions.

I have, &c.,
Jno. Neill, Secretary.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

Resolutions passed by the North Canterbury Education Board in Reply to Inquiries from the Parliamentary Committee appointed to inquire into the Working of the Education Act.

1. The interests of education would not suffer by raising the school-age for entrance from five to six years. But the real saving would be little or nothing in the country schools, and in the town

schools would not be in proportion to the diminution in numbers. Ultimately the saving would be chiefly in the item of school-buildings.

2. The payment of fees would be no economy from a national point of view. It would only be introducing a far more expensive mode of collection, and one that has been found to work badly in all systems of national primary education. The payment of fees by the more advanced scholars only would be a most objectionable tax upon progress.

3. The Board does not believe that the educational system in this district could be conducted efficiently with smaller means than are now at its disposal. Any curtailment of national grants for education will have to be supplemented by school districts. This means a more expensive method of raising the necessary funds. The Board has at present a large number of applications for necessary school-buildings which there are no funds to meet.

4. While the Board is not prepared to indorse all the items of the present Syllabus, and would prefer more time being given to the thorough teaching of fewer subjects, it does not believe that such an alteration would materially affect the cost of primary education.

3rd December, 1887. J. V. Colborne Neil, Secretary.

Mr. T. Kelly, Chairman, Education Board, New Plymouth, to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Education Office, New Plymouth, 27th November, 1887.

* * * * * * * * *

In conclusion I may briefly summarise my views with regard to the reduction of the cost of working the Education Act and making the administration more effective, viz. :—

1. Abolish Education Boards and School Committees, and make the Education Department do the work of the Boards, with power to delegate definite local powers to County and Borough Councils; or

2. Make one local body do all the work now done by the Education, Hospital, and Waste Lands Boards.

3. If Boards are retained let the Government nominate one-third of the members.

4. If Committees are retained let them be elected by ratepayers in the same manner as members of other local bodies.

5. Define by law the powers vested in the Board and the Committee so as to avoid conflict.

6. Make better provision for creating a lower grade of schools and a lower class of certificated teachers for such schools; also to give greater facilities of railway travelling to children.

7. Make the Inspector an officer of the department, and change his location, say, every two years. Fewer Inspectors would be required, and the system of inspection would, I think, be improved.

The Secretary, Education Board, South Canterbury, to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Education Board of the District of South Canterbury,

Sir,— Timaru, 15th December, 1887.

I have the honour, by direction of the Board of Education, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th November, 1887, and, in reply, to state that the following resolutions were passed this day :—

Re paragraph 1: "That this Board does not approve of any interference with the school-age as defined by the Act, for the following among other reasons: (*a*) The age of five years is not too young in the case of the majority of children for the purposes of early training and discipline; (*b*) that raising the school-age will materially affect the average attendance of many schools, necessitating their closing; (*c*) and, lastly, the raising of the school-age will be of great detriment to the revenue of the Boards, and so to their efforts to follow settlement with the means of instruction."

Re paragraph 2: "That the suggestion to charge fees for the higher standards does not commend itself to the Board as being desirable. On the contrary, that it would prove injurious to the present system of education by driving a number of children at too early a stage from the schools."

Re paragraph 3: "That, if retrenchment in educational matters is necessary, the Board would consent to the following: (1) The restriction of the capitation grant to the statutory sum of £3 15s. per head; (2) that powers be given to the Boards or Committees to raise, in some just and equitable way, whatever sums they may deem themselves deficient in from time to time."

Re paragraph 4: No recommendation.

I have, &c.,

T. W. Bamfield,

Secretary.

James G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee,
House of Representatives, Wellington.

Mr. Vincent Rice to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Board of Education, Auckland, 3rd December, 1887.

In answer to your circular, dated the 10th November, I am directed to state,—

1. That this Board sees no objection to raising the school-age to six years.

2. That, as payment of fees for the higher standards, unless accompanied by a remission of taxation equal to the amount paid in fees, would only be a method of exacting a further tax from the people, the opinion of this Board is that it is neither required nor desirable.

3. That this Board suggests for consideration whether teachers should examine and classify the scholars in Standards I. to IV., leaving the examination of Standards V. and VI. and the inspection of schools to the Inspectors, provided the efficiency of the schools is not impaired thereby.

4. That this Board sees no reason to alter the Syllabus in the public schools.

I am further directed to inform you that this Board has recently made considerable reduction in its expenditure on education. I have, &c.,

VINCENT RICE, Secretary.

James G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

Mr. STEAD ELLIS to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Education Office, Nelson, 7th December, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of the 10th November last, which has now been considered by this Board, and in reference thereto I am directed to forward, for the consideration of your Committee, the following resolutions:—

1. That it is advisable that the age at which children can claim admission to the public schools of the colony be raised from five to six years.

2. That school-fees should be levied for instruction in any standard higher than the sixth.

3. That the expenses in connection with the Department of Education at Wellington might be considerably curtailed, and thereby the cost of the working of the Education Act be materially diminished.

4. That any alteration of the Syllabus at present is not advisable.

In forwarding these answers to the specific questions contained in your circular, the Board directs me to state that, should the school-age be raised, special provision ought to be made whereby the large number of small country schools in this district (and others) may be kept open, and that, in the Board's opinion, the alteration of school-age should not apply to children at present in attendance.

I was also directed to state that, if no other method of raising money occurs to the Government, rather than diminish the advantages of the present system of education, a stamp-tax might be imposed on all public, musical, and theatrical entertainments, bazaars, art-unions, race-cards, totalisators, &c. I have, &c.,

STEAD ELLIS, Secretary.

The Chairman, Parliamentary Education Committee, Wellington.

REPLIES FROM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO CIRCULAR ON PAGE 24.

Mr. J. HAIN to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Invercargill, 1st December, 1887.

I have the honour to inform you that the Southland Educational Institute has considered the questions recently sent down by you, with the following result:—

1. In the opinion of this institute the school-age should be raised to six years.

2. This institute suggests that a saving might be effected by combining, where possible, several small schools.

3. Changes might be made in the Syllabus, as per enclosed copy of resolutions passed at a special meeting: (1.) "That the number of compulsory subjects included in the Syllabus is excessive." (2.) "That the compulsory subjects for individual examination and individual passes be restricted to reading—including explanation, spelling and dictation—writing, arithmetic, and composition." (3.) "That class subjects be divided into two groups, compulsory and optional: (*a*) Compulsory group—Grammar, geography, drawing; (*b*) Optional subjects—History, English literature, extra drawing, elementary physics, botany, physiology, chemistry (elementary and agricultural), mineralogy, or other authorised subjects. That one scientific subject shall be selected from the optional subjects. That the additional subjects remain as at present. (4.) That in schools with only one certificated teacher any two successive standards may be examined together in reading, writing, composition, grammar, geography, and in the optional subject or subjects chosen.

I have, &c.,

JAMES HAIN,
Honorary Secretary, Southland Educational Institute.

Mr. J. AITKEN to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Educational Institute of South Canterbury, Timaru, 26th November, 1887.

In reply to your circular of the 10th instant I have the honour to inform you that a special meeting of this institute was held in Timaru Main School this day, and that the following resolutions were unanimously arrived at, viz.,—

1. "That the President be instructed to reply to the Parliamentary Circular of the 10th November."

2. "That this institute is of opinion that the proposed raising of the school-age to six years is undesirable for the following reasons, viz: (1.) Because such a course cannot fail to result in serious injury to small and country schools, unless the allowances to larger schools be curtailed to a degree which will injure education in the centres of population. (2.) Because, although raising the school-age from five to six may seem to be only cutting off a year at the beginning of the child's school career, it is in reality the last and best year of which the child is deprived by such a course, seeing that children are in most cases removed from school at a given age, and not on passing a given standard. (3.) Because under nearly all great educational systems school-life begins at five years of earlier; and, if New Zealand interferes with her system in this respect, she will place herself in the rear of contemporary civilisation. (4.) Because a child entering school at six years of age will not

pass a given standard as early or as well as one who enters at five years of age. A very sharp child who enters at six may surpass an ordinary or a dull child who enters at five; but sharp children must by no means be taken as types. (5.) Because the idea is a mistaken one that, as regards physical health and mental vigour, children are up to the age of six or seven years better away from school, and that they learn nothing till that age is reached. Children are always learning; and if they are not at school they are learning elsewhere many things which were better not learned at all, and which will have to be unlearned when school is entered. But in the year from five to six children at school learn the important lessons of obedience, order, and reverence for law; and these, too, at a time when they are not likely soon to be forgotten. (6.) Because it is only the best home circumstances that can make up to the pupil for the want of school discipline and restraint; and here, as elsewhere, it is wrong to take the best as types."

3. "That, as regards the payment of fees for higher standards, this institute is of opinion that such an expedient would be as unremunerative as it would be detrimental to the cause of education, for—(1) if a fee were imposed the result would be that pupils would be removed from school immediately on passing the highest free standard—probably the Fourth—so that, just when the pupils were beginning to experience the benefits of their training in the lower standards, these benefits would be entirely dissipated by the removal of the child from school. In a few years the work of the four standards would be almost entirely forgotten, and the child would grow up with only the merest modicum of reading, spelling, and counting, which would serve to separate him from the class commonly known as illiterate. (2.) The imposition of school-fees would mean more clerical work for the teacher, who has more than enough of such work even now, and whose time is already fully occupied by the requirements of a heavy Syllabus."

4. "That this institute is of opinion that if retrenchment is to take place in this branch of the Public Service it should be in the one direction of reduction of grant. But we think that the whole of the parliamentary grant might be set free for purely educational purposes were some scheme carried out by which the building-grants to Education Boards could be considerably reduced or even abolished. This institute would suggest the following as a feasible scheme: (*a.*) Abolish School Committees. (*b.*) Allot smaller districts to Education Boards, so as to make them more truly a local authority. (*c.*) Empower Education Boards to levy a local rate for the support of school-buildings. (*d.*) Let Education Boards be elected in such a way as to make them directly responsible to the people whose money they spend. (*e.*) Place Inspectors under the control of the Inspector-General of Schools. Such a scheme would, this institute believes, not interfere with or lessen the administrative ability of Education Boards as a whole, while it would probably save a large portion of the enormous office-expenditure which obtains in some districts, and which in the year 1886 amounted in the aggregate to no less a sum than £10,695." *

5. With regard to improvements on the Syllabus, this institute, at a recent meeting, arrived at the following general resolutions, which I have the honour to lay before you: (1.) "That the number of compulsory subjects is excessive." (2.) "That the compulsory subjects for individual examinations hould be restricted to reading with explanation, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and composition." (3.) "That a pass in three subjects should be considered a pass for the standard." (4.) "That any two successive standards may be presented or taught together in reading, writing, composition, geography, and the optional subject or subjects chosen." (5.) "That class subjects should be divided into two groups, compulsory and optional: (*a*) Compulsory—Grammar, geography, drawing; (*b*) Optional—English history, English literature, Latin, French, German, extra drawing, algebra, Euclid, physics, mechanics, hydrostatics, botany, physiology, chemistry." [N.B.—The optional subjects to be selected by the teacher, and a three years' course to be prepared and submitted to the Inspector as at present.] (6.) "That a verbal report of examination results should be presented by Inspectors of Schools, such report to be unaccompanied by tabulated percentages. This institute considers that the encouragement of rivalry in such a matter as education is an unhealthy and an undesirable thing."

I have, &c.,
JAMES AITKEN,
President of the Educational Institute of South Canterbury.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. J. MURDOCH to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Kirwee, 2nd December, 1887.

I have the honour to forward you the following reply from the Canterbury Midland Branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute to your circular of the 10th November:—

1. It is undesirable to raise the school-age, as it would have the effect of closing a number of small country schools, and in many others would cause so considerable a reduction in salaries that only uncertificated and inferior teachers would accept the appointment.

2. If fees were charged there would be great difficulty in collecting them. Many teachers have now much trouble to get in the moneys due for books, &c., supplied to children. Charging fees would largely decrease the number of children receiving instruction in the higher standards, thus rendering the system less efficient in educating the masses than at present.

3. This branch considers that no substantial retrenchment can be made under the present Act; but if Parliament contemplates amending the Act, it thinks considerable saving might be effected: Firstly—By enlarging the present school districts, thus reducing the incidental expenses. Secondly—By placing teachers on the Civil Service List, and by instituting a system of promotions together with a colonial scale of salaries, many expenses might be curtailed and others entirely dispensed with.

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* *Vide* 10th Annual Report, p. ix., Table N.

4. The Syllabus now contains too many subjects, consequently the essential subjects suffer. It should be so framed that more time could be given to reading and composition than is now possible. This branch suggests the following as an improvement in the Syllabus :—

Standard I.—Pass subjects: Reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic. Class subjects: Drawing, repetition of easy verses, needlework, and drill. Optional subject: Singing.

Standard II.—Pass subjects: Reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic. Class subjects: Drawing, geography, repetition of verses, knowledge of subject-matter of reading lesson. Object-lessons with Standard III. needlework, and drill. Optional subject: Singing.

Standard III.—Pass subjects: Reading, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic. Class subjects: Drawing, grammar, and composition, geography, subject-matter of reading lessons, repetition of verses, needlework, drill, object-lessons with Standard II. Optional subject: Singing.

Standard IV.—Pass subjects: Reading and definition, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic. Class subjects: Drawing, grammar and composition, geography, recitation, needlework, drill. Optional subjects: Singing, English history, elementary science.

Standard V.—Pass subjects: Reading and definition, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic. Class subjects: Drawing, grammar and composition, geography, recitation, needlework, drill. History (grouped with Standard VI.): Leading features of English history. Optional subjects: Singing, elementary science.

Standard VI.—Pass subjects: Reading and definition, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic. Class subjects: Drawing, grammar and composition, geography, recitation, needlework, drill, history with Standard V. Optional subjects: Singing, elementary science.

The requirements in the subjects of each standard to be the same in the present Syllabus, except where otherwise specified.

This branch is of opinion that the system of examination and inspection should be uniform throughout New Zealand. This would be brought about in a great measure by the questions for examination in the standards being issued by the department to the various Inspectors. The Syllabus would thus receive one interpretation, instead of many, as at present.

This branch is also of opinion that one of the greatest difficulties teachers have to contend with is irregular attendance; and that the "compulsory clause" will never be carried out until the matter is taken out of the hands of Committees, and placed in those of the police.

I have, &c.,

JOHN MURDOCH,

Honorary Secretary, Canterbury Midland Branch.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. W. McDONALD to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Oamaru, 19th November, 1887.

In reply to your circular of the 10th instant I have the honour to inform you that it was considered at a special meeting of this branch to-day, when the following resolutions were adopted in connection with the various heads of the circular:—

1. That it would be inexpedient to raise the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid, inasmuch as that would be tantamount to raising the age at which children could be admitted to the school.

2. (*a.*) That Standard V. should be the highest compulsory standard, and that fees should be charged for any education given beyond the same.

(*b.*) In order to meet the case of children who are unable to pay for the more advanced education, a limited number of scholarships should be granted in each district to those who pass the Fifth Standard with credit, and that a portion of the present secondary endowments might be homologated to that purpose.

3. As suggestions towards the more economical working of the Act the branch resolved,—

(*a.*) That Education Boards should be abolished, and their work taken up the department.

(*b.*) That Inspectors of Schools should be required to inspect only, thus allowing their number to be reduced by one half.

(*c.*) That pupils attending primary schools should be required to pass only one examination during their school career, such examination to be in the subjects prescribed for the highest compulsory standard, and to be held simultaneously throughout the colony.

(*d.*) That payment of teachers on average attendance be abolished, and the schools classified according to size, with a fixed salary for each class, and that additions be made to such salaries according to the grade of the teacher's certificate.

4. (*a.*) That the number of compulsory subjects included in the syllabus is excessive.

(*b.*) That the compulsory subjects for individual examination and for individual passes be restricted to reading—including explanation, spelling, and dictation—writing, arithmetic, and composition.

(*c.*) That class subjects be divided into two groups—compulsory and optional. Compulsory group—Grammar, geography, and drawing. Optional subjects—History, English literature, extra drawing, elementary physics, physiology, chemistry (elementary and agricultural), mineralogy, or other authorised subjects. That the additional subjects remain as at present.

(*d.*) That in schools with only one certificated teacher any two successive standards may be examined together in reading, writing, composition, grammar, geography, and in the optional subject or subjects chosen.

It is to be noted that the suggestions under head 4 refer to the present state of the system, but the branch resolved that any alteration of the Syllabus would be useless until the system of inspection be regulated, and thoroughly brought under the control of the Department of Education.

Trusting that these suggestions, or some of them, may be found of practical use to your Committee,

I have, &c.,

W. McDonald.

Hon. Sec., Waitaki Branch, Educational Institute of Otago.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee.

Mr. G. Whitelaw to the Chairman, Education Committee.

New Plymouth, 28th November, 1887.

Sir,—

I have the honour, on behalf of the Taranaki Teachers' Institute, to acknowledge receipt of your circular *re* alterations in the educational system, and to forward certain resolutions in connection therewith passed at their meeting on Saturday last, the 26th instant.

Re Proposal I.: It was resolved, "That, in the opinion of this meeting, raising the school age would be injurious to the welfare of the children, as—especially in large centres—habits of obedience, regularity, and order can best be secured when children attend school at an early age."

Re Proposal II.: It was resolved, "That a small fee might be charged for all standards above the fourth; but teachers should not be held responsible for its collection."

Re Proposal III.: It was resolved, "That Inspectors and teachers should be put under the central department, and all appointments, removals, suspensions, and dismissals should be conducted by this department. Also, that a uniform rate of salaries for teachers should be constructed for the whole colony."

Re Proposal IV.: It was resolved, "(*a.*) That drawing be no longer a pass subject, and that history be withdrawn from the syllabus. (*b.*) That the teacher be not bound to any course in elementary science, the selection from the syllabus to be left to his own choice. (*c.*) That, in arithmetic, stocks and compound interest should not form part of the syllabus."

I have, &c.,

George Whitelaw,

Hon. Sec., Taranaki Teachers' Institute.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Committee of Education.

Mr. E. Just to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Educational Institute (North Canterbury Branch),

Christchurch, 24th November, 1887.

Dear Sir,—

In reply to your circular of the 10th instant I have the honour, by direction of the Committee of Management, to forward the following statement of its views upon the questions submitted by you for its consideration:—

1. That, from an educational point of view, it would be a retrograde step to raise the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid. The school age in New Zealand is already higher than that of Great Britain, or any of the Australian Colonies except Queensland. If the school age were raised, many young children would be compelled by home circumstances to run uncontrolled about the streets of our large towns, when they might be acquiring habits of order and discipline at school. Again, even under present circumstances only a small proportion of children reach the higher standards, and if the age of admission were raised that proportion would be still further reduced.

2. That the imposition of fees for higher standards would in many cases compel parents to withdraw their children from school and send them to work at too early an age.

3. Considerable saving might be effected by the establishment of a central architect's office, from which plans of buildings might be issued of a more suitable and economical character than are likely to be provided under the present system. Such a plan is found to work well in several of the neighbouring colonies.

4. With reference to the amendment of the syllabus, this branch of the institute has already forwarded the following suggestions to the New Zealand Institute for consideration at its annual meeting at Nelson in January next: (1.) That the number of compulsory subjects included in the syllabus is excessive. (2.) That the compulsory subjects for individual examination and individual passes be restricted to reading and explanation, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, and grammar and composition. (3.) That class subjects be divided into two groups—compulsory and optional. (*a.*) *Compulsory group:* Geography, drawing, and one of the following science subjects for Standards IV., V., and VI.: Elementary physics, botany, physiology, chemistry (elementary and agricultural), and mineralogy. Sewing will be required from girls in lieu of science and object lessons from all classes below Standard IV. (*b.*) *Optional subjects:* History, English literature, extra drawing, or other authorized subjects. (*c.*) *Additional subjects:* Recitation, drill, and singing. (4.) That in schools with only one certificated teacher any two successive standards may be examined together in reading, writing, grammar and composition, geography, and in the optional subject or subjects chosen; and that in schools under the sole charge of one female teacher science shall not be a compulsory subject.

I have, &c.,

Emilett Just,

Hon. Sec., North Canterbury Educational Institute,

Gloucester Street School.

James G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

Mr. A. PURDIE to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

DEAR SIR,— Wellington, 29th November, 1887.

In reply to the circular sent by you to our Teachers' Institute, I have been instructed to forward to you a copy of the following resolutions, passed at the last meeting of the Wellington Educational Institute:—

1. As to raising the age upon which the capitation allowance is paid, the institute is of opinion that to raise the school age would not be an advisable way of economizing, for the following reasons: It is against the practice of European authorities; the saving effected would be small; and the cost of teaching the remaining children would be proportionately increased.

2. As to the payment of fees for higher standards, the institute distinctly objects to the charging of fees in the higher standards, as it would lower the status of education and interfere with the free education of the people.

3. Suggestions as to the more economical working of the Act: The institute is of opinion that, if circumstances demand reduction, it be done by a percentage reduction on the grants alike for primary, secondary, and higher education. Also, the institute is of opinion that reductions might be made in the cost of administration of the Act.

4. Alterations that would improve the syllabus: The institute is of opinion that drawing should be made optional in all standards; also, that geography should be made a class subject.

I have, &c.,
ALEX. PURDIE,
Secretary, Wellington Educational Institute.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee.

REPORT of the EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE of OTAGO on the CIRCULAR issued by the PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE on EDUCATION.

THE Committee of Management of the institute have entered very fully in the various questions contained in your circular, and the report which I have now the honour of laying before you presents briefly the results of a careful consideration of the whole subject.

The institute is quite aware that a general opinion has been expressed in favour of cutting down the vote for primary education. So far, however, only vague and indefinite guesses have been made at the saving to be effected—a comparatively easy thing; but to point out in what manner, in what direction, and to what extent a reduction should take place, are questions not so easily disposed of.

Before entering upon the consideration of these particular issues, we wish to be permitted to make reference to one or two statements of a general nature usually advanced in discussing the education system of the colony.

The first of these is that we can have considerable—

I.—RETRENCHMENT WITHOUT UNDULY IMPAIRING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SYSTEM.

Now it is very evident that the professional skill or ability of the employés and the amount of their remuneration are the chief factors in determining the efficiency of any branch of the public service, and, as these react on each other, the question of efficiency becomes in the long run just a question of finance, so that every reduction in the scale of remuneration will have a tendency to impair the efficiency, unless, indeed, it can be shown that the employés are paid more highly than they ought to be paid—that a margin exists that may be taken off without detriment to the efficiency of the work.

Those who think that considerable retrenchment can be carried out without impairing the efficiency of the system should be prepared to affirm that the teachers of the colony are overpaid. Is this so?

Another, and apparently a strong argument in favour of reduction, finds expression in the statement—

II.—THAT, RELATIVELY TO REVENUE, THE NEW ZEALAND SYSTEM IS MORE COSTLY THAN ELSEWHERE.

It has been stated that the education vote for primary education in New Zealand is 11 per cent. of the revenue of the colony, whilst in New South Wales it is less. If the revenue in both cases refer to similar things, the institute submit that this higher percentage is due to the fact that the average attendance in New South Wales is 68·3 per cent., whilst in New Zealand, according to lats year's report, it stands at 78·6 per cent.; or, in other words, New Zealand, by means of regular attendance, is educating 10 per cent. more than New South Wales. We find also that, in proportion to population, New Zealand is educating about 25,000 more pupils than New South Wales, despite the fact that the school-age in the latter (4 to 14) is lower than in New Zealand.

These facts show that from various causes the people of New Zealand take a deep and special interest in education, an interest that it is well, to say the least of it, not to discourage.

We now come to the consideration of the various ways in which retrenchment has been proposed.

III.—RAISING THE AGE UPON WHICH CAPITATION GRANT IS PAID.

In the opinion of the institute the objections to this course are briefly these:—

(*a.*) That in almost every country where there is a State system of education the Government encourages attendance at an earlier age than in New Zealand.

(*b.*) Raising the age will materially affect small schools in outlying districts, where they are least able to bear retrenchment.

(*c.*) To raise the age practically means depriving large numbers of a year's schooling, as they are usually withdrawn to work to assist in maintaining the family at a given age, irrespective of their educational requirements.

(*d.*) As practical educationists we are decidedly of opinion that, as a rule, pupils entering school at six would not pass Standard IV. at the same time as those entering at five, and this applies with still greater force to the proposal to raise the age to seven.

(*e.*) It is quite a common mistake to suppose that children are as well out of school as in it until they are six or seven. Where the home influences are good, where there are facilities for learning in the home circle, the disadvantages are not so obvious; but, where these do not exist, if the school-age be postponed till six or seven, the children will undoubtedly be acquiring habits not in the least degree conducive to sound conduct and character.

(*f.*) The work in the initiatory department of the schools is often misrepresented: on the one hand it is said to be mere nursery-work, and on the other it is said to be work injurious to young pupils. Neither of these statements is correct.

(*g.*) The educational work of the first two years has a most beneficial influence both on the physical and mental condition and health of the pupils, and gives pleasurable and systematic training in habits of regularity, punctuality, obedience, and a liking for school, at an age when these things are of great disciplinary value. Rational methods of instruction, well-ventilated schools, an excellent climate, and the good physique of the children are all in the highest degree favourable to beginning school-life at the age fixed as at present.

For the above reasons the institute trust that the efficiency of the system will not be interfered with on this point.

The next proposal for lightening the cost is that of—

IV.—Payment of Fees for Higher Standards.

In the opinion of the institute the principle of free education for the complete course ought not to be touched, because—

(1.) To have fee-paying standards and non fee-paying would introduce into the schools a distinction of classes and a necessarily discordant spirit, the absence of which is one of the most satisfactory features of the State schools.

(2.) The mass of the people have, in the present condition of the colony, to pinch and scrape to keep their children at school for an additional year or two when they might be increasing the wage-fund of the family; but if fees are imposed in the higher standards a large withdrawal would immediately take place of the very pupils for whose benefit the Education Act is ostensibly in force.

(3.) There is a false impression abroad that in giving the six standards we are over-educating. Understanding, as we understand, precisely what the course of instruction is, we are of opinion that it is only when a pupil gets near the end of the course that he is beginning to reap the advantages of the lower work, and even then has not received more education than will enable him to discharge intelligently the duties of citizenship. If New Zealand is to maintain her position among the colonies it is inexpedient to lower her educational standard and status.

The next point is, in what way may retrenchment be effected, or—

V.—How to work the System more economically.

To retrench so as to leave the leading principles of the system untouched, and to keep intact the main provisions of the Education Act, can be effected by (*a*) reducing the captitation grant. This method commends itself to the institute as the most equitable way, and the way least injurious to the efficiency and completeness of the education system; and, since Education Boards often uselessly multiply the number of schools, placing three in a district where two larger ones would meet the requirements as efficiently and more economically, retrenchment and saving could be effected by (*b*) reducing the vote for school buildings.

VI.—The Syllabus.

It will be sufficient for our present purpose if we give a few general resolutions, that, in themselves, do not require any technical acquaintance with the Syllabus to make them intelligible, and that indicate at the same time what recomendations the institute has made to the Education Department on this important matter.

1. "That the number of compulsory subjects included in the Syllabus is excessive."
2. "That the compulsory subjects for individual examination and individual passes be restricted to reading and explanation, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, and composition."
3. "That a pass in three subjects be considered a pass for the standard."
4. "That class subjects be divided into two groups, compulsory and optional. (*a*) Compulsory group: Grammar, geography, and drawing. (*b*) Optional subjects (one of which shall be selected by the teacher): History, English literature, extra drawing, elementary physics, botany, physiology, chemistry (elementary and agricultural), mineralogy, or other authorised subjects. (*c*) That the additional subjects remain as at present."
5. "That any two successive standards may be presented together in reading, writing, composition, geography, and the optional subject or subjects chosen."
6. "That the method of tabulating the results of inspection for each school should be such as would do away with over-anxiety on the part of teachers to secure high percentages.

VII.—Conclusion.

The institute feel confident that the statements herein set forth will receive due weight and consideration, and, though reductions may have to be made, we trust that it will not be found necessary to curtail the advantages of the system, and thus run the risk of serious injury to the cause of education, and serious injury to the present well being and future prosperity of the colony.

Signed on behalf of Committee. D. White,

Dunedin, November, 1887. President, Educational Institute of Otago.

Mr. E. Cowles to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Richmond, Nelson, 29th November, 1887.

In reply to the circular addressed by you to the Nelson District Teachers' Association, I have the honour to inform you that the following resolutions were agreed to at a full meeting of the Association, held in Nelson on the 26th instant:—

1. As to the desirability of raising the age upon which capitation is paid: *Resolved*, That this Association considers the age should be retained.

2. As to charging fees for the higher standards: *Resolved*, That children who have passed the Fourth Standard should pay for their education; but that a system of scholarships be arranged to enable clever children to proceed to the Fifth and Sixth Standards.

3. As to the more economical working of the system: *Resolved*, That it be compulsory that no school books be provided at the Government expense; that the providing of teas, &c., and prizes, at the Government expense, be prohibited; that separate schools for the sexes in country districts be abolished; that schools be at least four miles apart in country districts; that no grants be made to secondary schools; that a maximum rate of expenditure per scholar in small schools be fixed, leaving any necessary balance to be made up locally.

4. As to alterations in the Syllabus: *Resolved*—(1.) That the number of compulsory subjects included in the Syllabus is excessive. (2.) That the compulsory subjects for individual passes be restricted to reading (including explanation), spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, and composition. (3.) That class subjects be divided into two groups, compulsory and optional: (*a*) Compulsory group — geography or history, grammar or English literature, needlework or drawing; (*b*) optional subjects—history (or geography, if not taken as compulsory), English literature (or grammar, as before), extra drawing, elementary physics, botany, physiology, chemistry (elementary and agricultural), mineralogy, or other authorised subjects; (*c*) that the additional subjects remain as at present. (4.) That in schools with only one certificated teacher any two successive standards may be examined together in reading, writing, composition, grammar, geography, and in the optional subject or subjects chosen.

Should the Committee require any other information than I am able to give, I shall have great pleasure in answering any further communications which may be sent.

I have, &c.,
E. Cowles,
Honorary Secretary, Nelson District Teachers' Association.

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Select Committee on Education.

The President, Auckland Branch of the Educational Institute, to the Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

Sir,— Wellesley Street, Auckland, 19th December, 1887.

In reply to the circular of the Education Committee asking for the opinion of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute on various questions of importance to education in this colony, I have the honour to forward to you the following resolutions, as embodying its views on those questions:—

(*a*.) As to raising the age upon which capitation is paid: "That this branch considers that the school-age should be raised to six years."

(*b*.) As to payment of fees for higher standards: "That this branch considers that no fees should be charged in public schools."

(*c*.) Suggestions as to the more economical working of the Act: "(1) That, in the opinion of this branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute, a very considerable saving might be effected in educational expenditure if proper precautions were taken to prevent the undue multiplication of small schools; (2) that, in the opinion of this branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute, a considerable retrenchment might be effected in the cost of education by placing Inspectors under the Central Department; (3) that, with a view to economy, it is desirable that the areas represented by local School Committees be enlarged."

I have, &c.,
E. H. Gulliver, M.A.,
President, Auckland Branch of the Educational Institute.

The Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington.

From the Wanganui Branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute.

1. "That this institute considers it would be most undesirable to raise the school-age to six, for the following reasons: By so doing a large proportion of the country schools would be either closed or considerable allowance made, which would in the end effect no saving. School-life, especially in country districts, is very short, and by raising the age one year it would be impossible to maintain the efficiency of the present system, as is shown by the age at which the several standards are passed. That it would result in the establishing of private schools for young children, whereby the taxpayer of New Zealand would have to pay more than twice."

2. "That, in the opinion of this institute, the proposal to impose fees on pupils in Standards V. and VI. is out of keeping with the national and free system of education as established. That the amount likely to accrue from the imposition of such fees would be too inconsiderable to effect the present cost per head. That fees would press heavily on the already overtaxed working-classes."

3. "That Education Boards be instructed to discontinue allowances to School Committees, and that all charges against Committees be made against the Boards when the expenditure has been sanctioned. That the number of Education Boards be reduced to eight—four for each Island

That this institute regards with disfavour the continuance of State aid to secondary schools and colleges. That Inspectors of Schools be placed under the Central Department. That scholarships and district high schools be abolished."

4. "(1.) That the number of compulsory subjects included in the Syllabus is excessive. (2.) That the compulsory subjects for individual examination and individual passes be restricted to reading — including explanation, spelling, and dictation — writing, arithmetic, and grammar. (3.) That class subjects be divided into two groups, compulsory and optional: (*a*) Compulsory group—Geography, drawing, and composition; (*b*) Optional subjects—History, English literature, extra drawing, elementary physics, botany, physiology, chemisty (elementary and agricultural), mineralogy, or other authorised subjects. That one subject shall be selected from the optional subjects. That the additional subjects remain as at present. (4.) That in schools with only one certificated teacher any two successive standards may be examined together in reading, writing, composition, grammar, geography, and in the optional subject or subjects chosen."

A. MATHESON, Secretary.

REPLIES FROM OTHER PERSONS TO CIRCULAR ON PAGE 24.

Mr. R. H. GIBSON to the Hon. the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

HON. SIR,— Upper Carrington Road, near New Plymouth, 22nd November, 1887.

As requested in your letter of the 16th instant, I will try to lay before the Committee on Education a brief statement of my views upon the subject.

1st. It appears to me the system is too complicated and too artificial, especially in the circumstances of the average child living in our rural districts. The Syllabus needs simplifying and weeding-out of more than one subject now taught in the Standards—*e.g.*, grammar, if taught at all, should be confined to Standards IV.–VI. As now taught, particularly to younger children, it is merely a "puzzler," and worse than a waste of time. Let children be taught their own language by regular and frequent exercises in writing down their own thoughts, &c., and their grammatical errors pointed out. Professor Brown, of Canterbury College, and the Nelson School Inspector have both made admirable observations on this subject. "Science-teaching," under existing conditions —*e.g.*, in the absence of apparatus and of qualified teachers in most schools—I do not hesitate to term a mere farce. In short, fewer subjects should be taught, and these in a simpler and more practical style. Again, promotion from class to class should be by classification, as in New South Wales and Tasmania. Our method is alike tedious, uncertain, and every way unsatisfactory.

2nd. The School Inspector should be appointed by the central department at Wellington, not, as now, by Education Boards. I have seen enough of the evils arising out of this latter method—evils too obvious to need mention, when the constitution of these Boards and the ordinary abilities of the members—very ordinary indeed—are taken into account. An intelligent, conscientious Inspector cannot do his duty; an unconscientious and inefficient Inspector will not attempt it: he will try to please the Board and School Committees, or influential members of either body—influential, too often, because unscrupulous. The Inspector might be suspended by the Board in case of incompetency or immoral conduct, pending inquiry by the Education Department. This is the plan, I believe, adopted by the Board of Health Department of the Privy Council in appointing or removing their medical officers. It is said to work well.

3rd. Either School Committees or Education Boards should be abolished. The two bodies are not wanted: their functions overlap, or are opposed to, each other; the result is a great waste of time, temper, and money. I am inclined to think an Education Board composed of one or more representatives from each school district, said representatives to be elected by *bonâ fide* householders, as members of County Councils, &c., now are, would be found to work tolerably well, and would certainly be far better than the present method.

4th. A school fee should be charged on each child. I came to New Zealand a thorough-going "free educationalist." I have been, against my will, converted to the opinion that a fee, however small, charged the parent, would have a most beneficial effect not only in improving the attendance of the children and giving the parents more interest in the school, but in checking the existing shameless waste of public money in innumerable ways, into the details of which I cannot possibly enter in writing.

5th. To meet the wishes of those who desire "religious instruction" in public schools or "Bible-reading," would it not be worth while to try the method so long and successfully pursued, by the late Archbishop Whately's advice, in the Irish National Schools, and adopted by more than one School Board—*e.g.*, the Birmingham—in England, the method of admitting ministers of religion and others, after school hours, to give "religious instruction," in separate class-rooms, to those children whose parents desire it?

6th. The salaries of Board Secretaries and School Inspectors might perfectly well be reduced, in most instances, at least 20 per cent.; even then their remuneration would be, considering the cost of living, &c., greater than in many far wealthier countries than our own—*e.g.*, Prussia and Switzerland.

I do not here enter on the difficult question of secondary education, except to say that, at present, it has the following grave defects: (*a*) It overlaps, in many places, the primary, instead of only supplementing it; (*b*) it is far too pretentious, and too exclusively modelled on the English public schools, instead of the American or German; (*c*) it is extravagant in the highest degree; (*d*) practically it is largely a class education; (*e*) no provision whatever exists for examination *ab extra*.

Apologising for these imperfect remarks on a matter in which I should have been glad to be heard and questioned personally by your Committee,

I am, &c.,

R. HENRY GIBSON,

Graduate of London University, late of University and Manchester New Colleges, &c.

The Hon. G. Fisher, Wellington.

Mr. R. H. Gibson to the Hon. the Minister of Education.

Sir,— Wellington, 28th December, 1887.

On Monday, the 19th instant, when, at your request, I appeared before the Education Committee, the Chairman desired me to send in a second letter to the Committee, offering any suggestions in reply to the questions of the Committee in the circular addressed to the Education Boards, a copy of which was placed in my hands. Accordingly, under cover to yourself, I write to answer these inquiries as briefly as possible.

1. The action of Parliament, taken recently, in declining to sanction the proposal of the Government to raise the school-age upon which the capitation allowance has hitherto been paid, I believe to be a mistake on other grounds than financial merely. In Taranaki I can speak from personal knowledge when I state that, in all but a very few schools, the accommodation and the teaching are alike so poorly adapted to young children as to render it desirable that these children should either remain at home or else be taught in what may be termed "dames' schools." In one of our schools no fewer than seventy children of tender years are taught, I believe, by one teacher, by no means specially trained for the work. In another they are taught by an elderly woman long past work of the kind. The moral effects of thus massing together young children of either sex, without adequate superintendence or proper discipline, is extremely bad. The attention of the Taranaki Education Board has been repeatedly called to this state of things, but nothing has yet been done, so far as I am aware, to remedy it. The cutting-off the capitation allowance would go to the root of the matter by compelling these children to stay at home till the age of six or seven. I have not yet seen in a single school in Taranaki—and I visited all but a very few when a member of the Education Board—either gallery lessons or collective lessons given as they are given at Home to these very young children. Of course such lessons may be given, but I very much doubt it. The personal experience of more than thirty years' teaching enables me to say that, with most children, time is rather gained than lost by not beginning their education too early.

2. As regards the payment of fees for the higher standards, I think that, as I have previously stated in a letter to your Committee, already printed in its report, fees should be charged on children in all the standards. To charge fees on those alone in the higher would be decidedly impolitic, and unjust to those few parents who, at considerable sacrifice to themselves, are desirous that their children should obtain something more than a purely elementary education. But I have been more than once impressed with the fact that too much haste and too little caution are sometimes shown in promoting children from the lower to the higher standards. I have examined papers done by pupils of our Taranaki schools in the Fifth and even in the Sixth Standards, and been forced to the conclusion that these pupils had far better have been first thoroughly grounded in the Fourth.

4. The fourth question has been already answered in my former letter to your Committee. I am reluctantly forced to the conviction that a very considerable proportion of children are leaving our primary schools, year after year, in Taranaki, in a condition which can be only described as uneducated. These children cannot read distinctly or with intelligence, and care little to read books of any but the most trashy kind for themselves; they cannot, in most cases, write their own language with ease or clearness, hardly even grammatically; they fail, more or less, to put their knowledge of arithmetic to a useful account; they know little of either geography or history beyond a list of names and dates: what is worse, by the present system of education, they are determined against education itself.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. G. Fisher, Minister of Education. R. Henry Gibson.

Mr. C. Hulke to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Newtown, 2nd December, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th November, and in reply beg to state,—

1. I am decidely in favour of raising the school-age from five to six. A child commencing school-life at six will, as a rule, overtake and pass those entering at an earlier age. Few children are at five either physically or mentally fitted to receive that training and instruction which should be paid for out of the public purse. In countries where there is a large pauper population it is, no doubt, in the interest of the State to remove very young children from the squalid haunts of misery and vice, if only for a few hours daily; but we have not yet arrived at that stage of civilisation. I may perhaps be allowed to remark that country children at five are, in many respects, quite equal to town children at six or even six-and-a-half years of age. Country children are healthier, more tractable; they are therefore more easily taught; and, as a consequence, those mental exercises which would over-excite the brain of a young town child do not with them act so injuriously.

2. Any attempt to charge fees for the higher standards would be unwise. The children would be taken away at an age when, in the opinion of the best European authorities, the training given in the lower standards and the instruction imparted in earlier years is about to bear fruit: so very few would remain that the higher standards would have to be given up. It has been suggested that a central school could be established for the Sixth Standard only, or for the Fifth and Sixth combined, in which extra subjects could be taught and a fee charged; but this school would only be an unhealthy opposition to the lower forms at the college.

3. School Inspectors should be departmental and not local officers. They should be directly under the control of the Inspector-General. This would, in many ways, lead to a more economical expenditure. At present there is an Inspector-General without any subordinates. The local Inspectors are simply dependent upon the good-will of the Boards from which they receive their appointments; and, however much they may desire to carry out the orders of the central department, they are often unable to do so, as they must respect the wishes of those to whom they are

directly responsible. This divided authority has, within my very limited knowledge, led to much unnecessary expenditure in the construction and ornamentation of school-buildings. I know of three schools in the colony in the construction of which a sum equal to the cost of three small country schools was completely wasted. Had the Inspectors been under the direct control of the Inspector-General this would not have happened; but, apart from a direct saving by reason of a smaller expenditure, the State would obtain a better return for the money spent.

4. I beg to suggest that examination-work for the Second Standard be shown on paper instead of on slates. The "Brief History of England" should cover all the requirements of any standard. On no account should drawing be excised from the list of pass subjects, it being quite as important as writing. No one can read the "Second Report of the Royal Commissioners on Technical Instruction," Vol. I., pp. 517–19, without being fully convinced that drawing is no insignificant factor in a nation's progress. The teaching of special sciences, as botany, to girls should not be permitted, unless the Inspector can certify that domestic economy is efficiently taught in the school. As many children leave on passing the Fourth Standard, some very elementary knowledge of fractions, such as how to multiply and divide by $4\frac{3}{5}$, $3\frac{1}{8}$, &c., should be required in that standard. No more formal grammar should be taught than is necessary to enable a child to write correctly. According to the Syllabus a Sixth-Standard child is required to analyse an easy complex sentence. Instead of this, it is not uncommon to find sentences given that are the reverse of easy—difficult complex sentences, the construction of which is so involved that a child cannot analyse them. Composition alone should be the test for a grammar pass. The time that is wasted in pretending to endeavour to untie the knots in such sentences could be more profitably devoted to the rough study of natural science and to drawing.

I feel convinced that these suggestions would not be needed were the Inspectors under the control of the Central Department, as then there would be but one interpretation of the Syllabus, whereas now there are many. The Syllabus is an excellent one; its requirements are by no means excessive; but the spirit of the author is too often lost sight of in the wrong interpretation of it.

Thanking you for the courtesy extended in permitting me to make these suggestions,

J. G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Education Committee.

I have, &c.,
CHARLES HULKE.

The Rev. JOHN STILL to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— St. Paul's Parsonage, Wellington, 21st November, 1887.

In answer to the questions forwarded to me I beg to submit the following answers:—

1. At what age do the children come to school?—From three years old.

2. Do you find that teaching at an early age has any beneficial effect on the children's after-work, or otherwise?—It has a beneficial effect chiefly in inculcating habits of order and discipline, which lead up to attention and application afterwards.

3. How long is it found that a child remains at school before it can pass the First Standard?—As the school has not yet been open four years it is difficult to give a reliable answer. I add a list of scholars about to be presented for Standard I. at the end of the present quarter, which may throw some light on the question.

4. What is the cost per child per annum up to Standard I.?—We have no means of knowing this as distinct from the other children. The cost per child throughout the school during the last year is about 32s. The fee charged is 6d. per week per child. The rest of the money is made up by subscriptions. The salaries are as follows: Head-mistress, £100 per annum; 2 assistants, £40 per annum. This does not represent the market value of the mistress or assistants. We have no difficulty in getting assistants. The school is examined annually by the Government Inspector. Last year for Standard I. 21 candidates were presented, and 19 passed; for Standard II. 9 candidates were presented, and 9 passed. The reports are generally favourable.

I enclose the attendance papers which I have in hand.

I am, &c.,
JOHN STILL.

James G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman Education Committee.

Enclosure.

CANDIDATES to be PRESENTED for STANDARD I.

Girls.

Age when entered school. Years.	Present Age. Years.	Age when entered school. Years.	Present Age. Years.
4	7	$7\frac{1}{2}$	$8\frac{1}{2}$
3	7	$6\frac{1}{2}$	7
6	8	7	$7\frac{1}{2}$
5	8	5	$7\frac{1}{2}$
$6\frac{1}{2}$	8	4	$7\frac{1}{2}$
$3\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{2}$	4	$6\frac{1}{2}$
$4\frac{1}{2}$	$7\frac{1}{2}$		

Boys.

$5\frac{1}{2}$	$7\frac{1}{2}$	6	8
$4\frac{5}{6}$	8	$7\frac{1}{2}$	8
3	7	$6\frac{1}{2}$	$7\frac{1}{2}$

Mr. W. Mowbray to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— Wellington, December, 1887.

I have the honour to submit the following replies to the questions contained in your circular:—

1. I do not think the school-age can be raised without disaster both to children and teachers. The children will suffer because they will be deprived of a large portion of that early training which every experienced teacher recognises as invaluable. The difference in intelligence and progress in standard-work of a child from a kindergarten or good infant school as compared with that of a child without such training is immense.

The teachers will suffer, because not only must a large number be dismissed, but those who remain must undergo a cruel diminution of income. The number of children under six years of age in the schools is, as nearly as I can ascertain, over 12,000, which, at the late rate of capitation, represents a revenue to the Boards of £48,000 per annum. These children are taught by 300 pupil-teachers, whose joint salaries will not amount to £10,000; and the difference between that sum and £48,000 represents the loss to the Education Boards by raising the school-age one year. Take the Thorndon Infant School as an example. There are 190 children, under a mistress and four pupil-teachers. A third of the children are under six years. Supposing that they be debarred from the school, one, or at most two, of the pupil-teachers could be dispensed with, the other expenses continuing as before. The Board would thus save £50 per annum, and lose £250 on this school alone.

This loss can only be recouped, so far as I can see, by school-fees or by a special taxation upon teachers. The Boards cannot impose the former, and must therefore resort to the latter. If, in addition to this, teachers have to bear the loss caused by the withdrawal of the 5s. capitation fee, the effects of the alteration will indeed be disastrous to them. I may add that the small country schools are in great measure supported by the surplus revenues of the infant schools, and that if the school-age is raised there will be little or no surplus revenue.

2. By the term "higher standards" in this question I presume Standards V., VI., and VII. are meant. On this supposition, and taking the Education Report for 1886 (Table E) as a basis, there would be only 5,476 liable to pay fees. As the attendance after passing the Fourth Standard is voluntary, a fee of even £1 per annum would probably reduce this number to one-half, and the amount thus produced would be inconsiderable.

My own opinion is in favour of school-fees at all stages, or, if that be impossible, that the Committees should be empowered to make a charge upon parents at least sufficient to cover the cost of cleaning, fuel, stationery, &c. One shilling per quarter would be sufficient on each child attending the schools.

3. Under this head I can only suggest the discouragement of small schools. Large schools are the most economical; but at present Boards seem more inclined to build new schools than enlarge existing ones. On railway-lines much could be saved by establishing a central school, and, by means of free passes, bringing all the children within fifteen miles on either side to it. These large schools, too, should be built on an uniform plan; each class-room constructed to hold at least 100 children, and be under the charge of a master and pupil-teacher. Under the better classification which large schools permit, this number would be not any too large for the two teachers to manage. At present the average number of pupils to each teacher is something under thirty.

4. A glance at the Table E before mentioned, and a careful study of the way in which the numbers diminish as the higher standards are reached, will show that the Fourth Standard is the limit of education for the great majority of our children; and this class, I think, should be especially considered in compiling a Syllabus of instruction. There are too many subjects in our present Syllabus to be well grasped by children who leave school thus early. Their hold upon each is slight, and easily lost after leaving school. This is the opinion of very many teachers and Inspectors. The Inspector for Hawke's Bay, Mr. Hill, in his last report, says, "I am convinced that many of those who are now passing through the schools would be able to look back upon their school-life with much greater pleasure if more thoroughness in a few subjects were demanded from them instead of superficiality in the many." On what principle should we select those few subjects? I think we should choose those which most require the aid of a teacher, and which are most directly applicable to the business of life, rejecting those which can readily be attained by self-culture, or which are less practical in their character. I should, therefore, up to the Fourth Standard, limit the pass subjects to reading, writing, arithmetic, and composition; the class subjects to free-hand drawing, and object-lessons or physical science, or (for girls) sewing; and the optional subjects to vocal music and drill. Geography and history could be left to what the children would acquire from the excellent readers now in use, and grammar would necessarily be taught in teaching composition, but not in the order prescribed by the present Syllabus.

Again, the Syllabus fails to meet the wants of the pupils who remain for the higher standards in two respects:—

(*a.*) It pays no regard to the environment of the school, or the probable future of the children. Whether they come from agricultural, mining, pastoral, commercial, or manufacturing districts they are all supplied with the same pabulum:

(*b.*) For those who intend continuing their education it provides no introduction to secondary subjects. Thus, primary pupils when they proceed to the higher schools are placed at a disadvantage by their ignorance of Latin, &c., and the principals of the schools are often embarrassed by the difficulty of classing them.

I think both these defects might be remedied by allowing more latitude to teachers in selecting subjects for these standards.

In addition to greater proficiency in the programme of the lower standards, the department might prescribe one additional subject, and allow the teacher to choose one or two more from a given list. The latter would naturally choose what would be of most use to his pupils, or what he felt himself most able to teach well, and in either case more valuable results might be expected.

I think it is probable that if some such plan were adopted pupils would be induced to remain longer at school, and pay a moderate school-fee; and also that by the simplification of the standards greater facility would be given for grouping classes, and thus enable a larger number of pupils to be taught by one teacher. At present, owing to the fact that each standard has special portions of grammar, history, and geography to study, this grouping of standards is impossible.

I have, &c.,

J. G. Wilson, Esq., Chairman, Education Committee. W. Mowbray.

Mr. W. H. Vereker-Bindon to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Education Office, Wanganui, 13th December, 1887.

Sir,—With reference to your circular *re* the working of our Education Act I have the honour to reply as follows:—

(1.) As to raising the Age upon which the Capitation Allowance is paid.

From an educational, as distinguished from a monetary, point of view, I not only see no objection to raising to six years, the age upon which the capitation is paid, but I consider that it would be an advantage to do so. I am convinced that in many country schools, conducted by only one teacher, the very young children in the preparatory classes, so far from drawing benefit from attending, are materially injured, for they pick up bad habits,—habits of idleness, inattention, untidy slate-work, &c.—which it takes some time afterwards to eradicate. And this is not surprising when it is considered that in this class of schools one teacher often has to teach six standards. In the other schools, outside those in which there are well-conducted infants' departments, I think that children do not gain much by attending between the ages of five and six. I have little doubt that a pupil entering an ordinary primary school at six years of age would pass the First Standard in as short a period and quite as well as another pupil entering the same school at five years of age.

(2.) As to Payment of Fees for Higher Standards.

I should be in favour of seven standards, fees to be charged for Standards VI. and VII. If parents had to pay for the education of their children in the higher branches they would take care that such children attended more regularly and more punctually than they do at present. This statement is borne out by the fact that parents whose children receive private lessons in music are zealously careful that not one lesson is missed, and not one minute of any lesson lost. When it comes to their children attending a free primary school regularly and punctually it is quite a different matter; and to stop away from school a day or two weekly, or to be half an hour late every morning, is of little consequence.

(3.) As to the More Economical Working of the Act.

I think that district high schools should be abolished, and that no State aid should be given to secondary education except in the form of scholarship grants, which should be higher than at present. Teachers' training colleges also should, I think, be abolished. If the largest schools in the districts were so staffed that the head-teachers could devote the greater portion of their time to overlooking and advising their subordinates, I consider that young people could be trained for the profession quite as well as they are at present at the training colleges, and at far less expense.

I have always been of opinion that Inspectors should be officers of the department. Whether a change in this direction would tend to economy in administration or not I have no means of judging.

I think considerable reductions would be effected by altering the whole system of appointment and employment of teachers. There should be a uniform scale of salaries of teachers throughout the colony, based upon the average attendances at schools, as well as upon the records and certificates of teachers. All teachers, I consider, should be Government servants; and a record of their services, reports, &c., should be kept by the department. When a vacancy for a teacher occurred in any district the department could forward to the Board of the district the names of suitable teachers, together with full information concerning such teachers, taken from a register. The Board would then make its selection and appoint. Some such plan as this would save a considerable portion of the large amount of money now spent by the various Boards in advertising. Teachers, too, could be promoted or reduced according to their deserts, in the same way as Civil servants. Under the present system of appointing teachers it is often difficult to promote a deserving servant, or to reduce, without dismissing, a teacher who proves a failure in a particular position at a particular school, but who might do well elsewhere in another position.

(4.) As to Alterations which would improve the Syllabus.

After a two years' trial of drawing I am convinced that this subject should be made a class subject. Certainly, few pupils in the higher standards will be able to pass in the present requirements if drawing is continued as a pass subject. With regard to class subjects I think that some, as object-lessons, geography, and history, should be compulsory; and that others, as drawing and science, should be optional. The science programme should be more limited; or it might be subdivided, each subdivision to count as one optional subject. Teachers in certain classes of schools should be obliged to take one optional subject, but they would be allowed to make their own choice. Some teachers and some pupils cannot and never will be able to draw, naturally enough. Then, again, in some country schools there are not half a dozen pupils above Standard III., and in such cases science should not be required.

Coming to individual standards, I think that Standards I. and II. should be left as they are at present, with the exceptions that drawing should be made a class subject in both standards; that in writing, in Standard I., in addition to the present requirements, pupils should be asked to

write on slates simple words; and that some pence tables should be introduced into the arithmetic of Standard II.

In Standard III. I think it would be well to abolish history, and to make geography a class subject. In grammar I should like to see very simple analysis introduced. In arithmetic division and multiplication of money by factors should be special features..

The work in Standards IV., V., and VI. might be spread over four years, with some alterations and additions. In grammar, in Standard IV., simple analysis should be required, and knowledge of government by a transitive verb and by a preposition; and the arithmetic might be somewhat lessened, say, by the striking out of compound practice and paper-work in lineal measure and square measure, excepting inches, feet, yards, links, and chains. No sums should be given involving perches, furlongs, and roods. In Standard V. arithmetic, interest, and proportion might be omitted; while first principles and vulgar and decimal fractions should be required. If interest is required, finding of time, rate, and principal should not be included, and the rule should be taught by first principles. Geography, perhaps, in this standard (Standard V.) might be made a class subject, that is, supposing there to be a Standard VII. In both Standards IV. and V., arithmetic, I think very simple mensuration of surfaces (length and breadth being given in the same, and in only one, denomination in Standard IV.) should be required. I think it should be insisted that two reading books be used in every class, except, perhaps, Standard I., during the year. In Standard VII. some literature should have a place. In assigning marks for reading, knowledge of subject-matter should undoubtedly be taken into consideration. The present history of Standard III. should be taken in Standard IV.

With a view to having somewhat similar examination tests applied throughout the colony, I am of opinion that there should be a Chief Inspector, whose duty it would be to pay periodical visits to the various districts, and to consult with and advise the other Inspectors.

Before closing this report I should like to say, with reference to the examination schedules, that it would be well to have upon them a column showing the attendances of every pupil since the last examination. The attendances of those pupils counted excepted if they failed to pass their standards could be marked in red ink. Also the possible attendances should be counted up to, say, a week before the examination, not, as at present, up to the last day of the quarter preceding that quarter in which the examination is held. Under the present system, when the examination takes place at the end of a quarter, the attendances of a pupil during the whole quarter in which probably he has attended most regularly are not counted.

I have been for some time, and am now, engaged daily with examinations in standards, so that I have with difficulty found time to write anything in a connected form in reply to your circular. I have only to add that I have given you my opinions without reserve.

I have, &c.,

James G. Wilson, Esq., M.H.R.,
Chairman, Education Committee.

W. H. Vereker-Bindon, M.A.,
Inspector of Schools.

Mr. A. D. Riley to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Sir,— School of Design, Wellington, 12th December, 1887.

In accordance with your request I have prepared the following report upon the work of the Art Department, as suggested by me in evidence given before the Education Committee of the House:—

1. Object of the Art Department:—
   - (*a.*) To establish a thorough system of drawing for the primary and secondary schools of the colony:
   - (*b.*) To supervise the training of teachers in such schools in drawing:
   - (*c.*) To formulate a proper standard of examination in drawing:
   - (*d.*) To establish schools of art and technical-drawing classes:
   - (*e.*) That the system to be formulated shall provide for a gradual development and connection from the primary to and through the technical and secondary schools.

2. Departmental:—
   - (*a.*) The department of art to be a separate and distinct department from the present educational one, in order that fees may be charged for instruction in art and technical classes.
   - (*b.*) Salaries of officers of the department not to exceed the sum of £800 per annum. (*Note.*—If the clerical work is done by the Government clerks this amount would be less.)
   - (*c.*) The head of the department shall be responsible to the Minister of Education for the organization, development, and results of the department.
   - (*d.*) The Inspector-General of Schools and the headmasters of the Dunedin, Christchurch, Auckland, and Wellington Schools of Art to be constituted a body for consultation, if necessary.

3. Primary Schools:—
   - (*a.*) Revision of the standard-work in drawing in primary and secondary schools. The Education Department to be relieved of the control of the revision of this work of the standards in drawing, but subject to a reasonable amount of time being set apart for drawing. The proposed scheme not otherwise to interfere with the teaching of other subjects.
   - (*b.*) The primary-school work to consist of first-grade drawing in accordance with the requirements of the South Kensington Art Directory. Subjects of instruction as

follows: 1. Free-hand drawing. 2. Model drawing. 3. Scale drawing. 4. Geometrical drawing, including simple solids.

(*c.*) Certificates to be awarded for passes in the above, and a complete certificate upon passes being obtained in all four sections.

(*d.*) Children not connected with any school under the Education Department to be permitted to sit for any section of this certificate upon payment of a registration-fee of one shilling for each section taken.

(*e.*) *Examinations* to be held annually in the month of June.

(*f.*) Only such pupils as have made reasonable progress, and who may be considered and selected by the head-teacher of such school as fitting candidates to be presented, are to be put forward for examination for the pass in the various stages.

(*g.*) A scholar who has passed in any section shall not be examined again in that section.

(*h.*) A scholar shall not be examined in first- and second-grade drawing in the same year.

(*j.*) Scholars under the age of seventeen only shall be examined in first-grade drawing.

(*k.*) No scholar attending a primary school under the age of seventeen shall be permitted to sit for second grade unless holding a full first-grade certificate.

(*l.*) Examinations to be managed by Education Boards and their officers in their respective districts, members of local Committees to act as supervisors in each school under examination.

(*m.*) Secretaries of Education Boards to act as correspondents with the Art Department for each educational district, with reference to this examination.

(*n.*) *Drawing Models:* A grant of 50 per cent. of the net cost of drawing models should be made to any School Committee desirous of purchasing sets of models, such models being made by local firms (approved by the department) in each educational district, from examples supplied by the Art Department.

(*o.*) Models to be used as follows:—

1 set of 8 wire models.	Cost to schools of 20s., and to department	20s.
1 set of 8 solid models.	Cost to schools of 15s., and to department	15s.
1 set of 12 casts.	Cost to schools of 6s., and to department	6s.
Total	£2 1s. ...	£2 1s.

I would suggest that a sum of, say, £300 be devoted annually towards grants of 50 per cent. for models to schools. This sum for a period of five years would provide every school efficiently with the necessary apparatus.

(*p.*) The number of sets required to furnish schools with over 100 scholars would be about 282. The number of half-sets required for schools with under 100 scholars would be about 773. The largest schools should be immediately dealt with, and the smaller ones by degrees.

(*q.*) Models should be supplied through Education Boards only, the Art Department refunding the 50 per cent, and insuring that proper examples are furnished.

(*r.*) *Inspection:* Primary and secondary schools should at all times be open to any person connected with or appointed by the Minister of Education to this department, for the purpose of inspecting the work of the scholars or hearing practical lessons given by the teachers to a class.

4. Secondary Schools:—

(*a.*) Subjects of instruction to consist of advanced stages of primary-school or second-grade work, with the addition of linear perspective. These subjects to be in accordance with the Art Directory, S.K.

(*b.*) Certificates to be awarded for passes in each section, and a full certificate upon completion of the whole of the sections.

(*c.*) Children not connected with any school to be permitted to sit for examination in any section upon payment of 2s. 6d. registration-fee for each section, or 10s. for the complete certificate.

(*d.*) Examinations to be held annually in the month of September.

(*e.*) Candidates having passed in any section shall not be again examined in the same section.

(*f.*) Examinations shall be supervised by members of the governing bodies of such schools.

(*g.*) Drawing models may be purchased through the department, but no grant should be made in aid of such models.

5. Training of Primary-school Teachers in Drawing:—

(*a.*) In the School Districts of Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland schools of art or art-classes are already established, where teachers are trained. I propose that schools should be established in the remaining nine districts by degrees, and that throughout the colony teachers shall be trained as far as possible at these schools. I shall deal with this matter of schools of art under a separate heading.

(*b.*) The course of instruction for teachers should be a thorough one in the second-grade subjects, with the addition of blackboard-practice from memory, and rapid sketching of common objects.

(*c.*) Special lectures upon the methods of teaching drawing should be given by the various art-masters, and the schools visited as often as possible to see that the instruction is given in accordance with the suggestions made by the art-master.

(*d.*) Specialists are not required to give the instruction in drawing in primary schools; the work can be far more effectually done by the ordinary teachers of the classes, with the practical hints above referred to. From experience I am strongly of opinion that this is the most effectual method of dealing with the work.

(*e.*) Examinations: A special section for the examination of teachers for the second-grade teachers' certificates shall be held in September, under the direct supervision of the art-masters and members of the Education Boards in the art-schools of the various districts. The blackboard-practice should be revised by the art-master.

6. Cost of Examinations for Primary and Secondary Schools and Teachers of the Education Department, One Year:—

(*a.*) 15,000 first-grade papers, at 60s. per 1,000...	£45	0	0
3,000 second-grade papers, at 100s. per 1,000	15	0	0
Forms, registers, certificates, &c.	33	0	0
	£93	0	0

Forms and registers would be office stock, and would not all be required each year.

Note.—The number of first-grade papers taken in the Wellington District this year was about 1,200; the number of second-grade was about 600.

7. Schools of Art and Technical-drawing Classes:—

Schools of art and technical-drawing classes, with special classes in architecture and applied mechanics, should be established in all the principal centres. It is a difficult matter for some Education Boards to provide the necessary funds for the purpose of employing an art-master, but I think local Committees may readily be formed to undertake the business-management of these classes in the educational centres.

The teachers for the general classes in some instances may be obtained from the schools of art already in existence.

Many Educational Boards could afford a sum of, say, £100 per annum as a salary for an instructor to their teachers, and who should also visit the local schools for the purpose of seeing his instructions carried out; £100 in such townships should be obtained from classes in art-subjects during the day, and £100 from evening technical classes; making a total of £300 per annum: for this sum a teacher holding a partial or art-class teacher's certificate should be obtained.

(*b.*) The classes may be held in mechanics' or literary institutions, schools, or other educational institutes.

(*c.*) Expenses in connection with gas and cleaning should be defrayed by the local Committee.

(*d.*) Local Committees should be constituted of not less than five well-known and responsible persons who may be members of Education Boards or a separate body. Local Committees should—

1. Provide suitable rooms or room for the meeting of the classes;
2. Keep registers of the students and their attendances, and be responsible for general conduct of classes;
3. Be responsible for conducting the examinations according to the regulations;
4. Admit for examination candidates not connected with the class, and inform them of the results of their examinations;
5. Devote all payments received from the department to the maintenance and instruction of the drawing classes;
6. Be responsible for the safe custody (on the premises) of all examples, casts, &c., provided or lent by the Art Department.

(*e.*) *Models* to the extent of £10 for each new school should be provided by the Art Department. This would be quite sufficient to commence with, and could be added to by degrees.

(*f.*) *Grants*, in cases of schools having no funds or reserves to work upon, would be absolutely necessary, but such grants would be small at first unless the schools assumed very large proportions. In large schools where professional men were engaged it would be necessary to give about pound for pound on fees received from technical classes only, not from day-classes. The Wellington School of Design is in great want of some such support, and the successful working is impossible until relief is given.

(*g.*) *Examinations* should be held annually and certificates awarded, but all advanced works should be collected from the various schools and forwarded to the South Kensington Art Department for examination and for national competition. Arrangements of this nature are already in force in connection with the Wellington School.

8. Total Expenditure per Annum:—

Salaries	£650	0	0	or £800 if clerical work is not done by a Govern-
Printing	93	0	0	ment clerk.
Incidental	150	0	0	
Grants to schools ...	600	0	0	
Grants for models ...	300	0	0	for 5 years only.
Total	£1,793	0	0	

Arthur D. Riley.

Dr. Hislop to the Chairman, Education Committee.

Dunedin, 7th December, 1887.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter of the 14th ultimo, your two printed circulars dated the 10th ultimo, and a copy of the evidence given before the Education Committee by the Rev. Mr. Habens. In response to your courteous invitation, I

respectfully submit the following statement of my opinions respecting some of the questions that are engaging the attention of your Committee. I regret that other pressing engagements have prevented me from sending an earlier reply and from going more fully into the subject.

STATEMENT.

Mr. Habens's Evidence and Statement.—I have carefully perused the evidence given by Mr. Habens before the Education Committee, and also the statement made by that gentleman on the 15th ultimo at the request of the Committee. I feel bound to state that if I had been under a similar examination I should have given in effect the same replies as those made by Mr. Habens on all, or almost all, the points brought under consideration.

Reply of the Otago Educational Institute to the Committee's Circular.—I have also carefully studied the reply recently given by the Otago Educational Institute to the circular issued by the Education Committee, and I agree with the views of the institute as expressed in the first four sections of that reply. These relate to the following matters: I. Retrenchment without unduly impairing the present system. II. The relative cost of the New Zealand educational system. III. The raising of the school-age upon which the capitation grant is paid. IV. Payment of fees for instruction in the higher standards.

Raising the School-age.—Although I agree with Mr. Habens in the opinion that the attendance of very young children at a small school in charge of only one teacher may create a difficulty in the conduct of the school that does not exist in the case of a properly-organized school in which two or more competent teachers are employed, yet I do not see any sufficient reason why any distinction should be made between the two classes of schools as regards the entrance-age. I have carefully studied the examination reports of the Inspectors, and I find that the reports on the smaller country schools under one teacher usually bear favourable comparison with those on the larger schools as regards the proficiency of the younger children. Ability to profit without injury to health by beginning school-attendance at an early age depends a good deal, in my opinion, upon the robustness of the child, and in this matter I am inclined to think that country-bred children as a rule have the advantage over many of those living in large towns. It is, of course, indispensable in all cases that the class-room be comfortable and well ventilated, and the method of instruction suitable.

The following table shows the number of schools in the Otago Education District in charge of only one teacher, and the number of schools in which two or more teachers are employed. The table shows also the present attendance (October, 1887), the number under six years, the number over six and under seven years, the total number under seven years, and the numbers that would be on the roll if those under six years and those under seven years were not entered. I append a statement of the particulars as regards each of the small schools, so that it may be seen how the removal of the younger children from the roll would affect each school:—

Schools.	Number of Schools.	Total Number on the Roll.	Pupils on the Roll.			Number on Roll after deducting	
			5 and under 6 Years.	6 and under 7 Years.	5 and under 7 Years.	All under 6 Years.	All under 7 Years.
With one teacher only	106	3,797	183	357	540	3,614	3,257
Having two or more teachers ..	80	18,835	1,218	1,848	3,066	17,617	15,769
Total	186	22,632	1,401	2,205	3,606	21,231	19,026

The proportion of children under six years to the total number on the rolls is as 1 to 20·75 in the schools with one teacher only, and as 1 to 15·46 in the larger schools. The proportion of those under seven years to the total enrolment is as 1 to 7 in the smaller, and as 1 to 6·1 in the larger schools. These figures show that in the Otago District the proportion of young children, especially of those under five years, to the total enrolments is less in the small country schools than in the larger ones in the towns. This is what might be expected. As a rule, the smaller schools are situated in sparsely-settled districts, where many families reside at a distance from the schoolhouse, and where the roads and tracks are in such a condition, especially in wet weather, as to prevent very young children from attending.

Kindergarten Schools.—I quite agree with Mr. Habens in the opinions expressed by him in his replies to Questions 11 and 12 regarding the so-called kindergarten schools. The schools of this description that I know of are denominational schools or class schools. I do not think there is any school in New Zealand entitled to lay claim to the character of a properly-equipped kindergarten school as regards appliances and the requisite skill on the part of the conductor. I believe, however, that in a very large proportion, if not in all, of the preparatory departments of the New Zealand public schools the principles that underlie the kindergarten method are recognised and acted upon with greater or less success. There is every reason to expect that this will become more and more the case as the skilled and intelligent masters and mistresses trained in our normal schools obtain appointments in increasing numbers. In connection with the question as to the cost of maintaining infant or preparatory departments in public schools, it must be admitted that the cost per child is much less than the capitation grant received by the Education Boards. Such cost may be estimated at from 25s. to 30s., but the important fact must not be overlooked that the Boards obtain a large proportion of the means to maintain the relatively costly weak schools in outlying districts by the savings they are able to effect in the management of the junior divisions of their large schools, upon which they expend much less per child than the capitation grant they receive from the Colonial Treasury.

Payment of Fees for the Higher Standards.—I consider it unnecessary to do more than state

that I quite agree with what has been so well said by Mr. Habens and by the Otago Educational Institute in their respective replies to the Education Committee on the question of charging fees for instruction in the higher standards. The main sufferers in the event of such fees being imposed would undoubtedly be the children of the humbler and less wealthy classes, and one of the effects of such fees becoming legally leviable would be to convert the public schools into class schools to a considerable extent. In this connection I venture respectfully to submit that, until the repeal of subsection 6, section 84, of "The Education Act, 1877," it will not be lawful for an Education Board or a School Committee to levy school-fees from any of the pupils attending a public school except as provided in the case of district high schools. If, therefore, the Government, before a change is made in the law, refuses to pay the capitation grants to Boards in respect of pupils who have passed the Sixth Standard, Boards would be deprived in a very large measure of the means of providing instruction to such pupils as have passed the Sixth Standard who may be desirous of still further prosecuting their studies at the public schools. It may be urged that such pupils could attend high schools, district high schools, or other institutions. This is saying, in effect, that the children of the humbler and poorer classes shall not receive an education beyond what will enable them to secure a bare pass in the Sixth-Standard examination; or, in other words, that none but the children of the rich shall have an opportunity of extending their school-education beyond what will secure a bare pass in the Sixth Standard except a select few, who by their own ability, or, what is more likely, the skill of their teachers in the art of cramming, may succeed in winning scholarships. I venture also to express the conviction that the withdrawal of the capitation grant in respect of scholars who have passed the Sixth Standard will most effectually destroy the district high schools of Otago—institutions that have proved of incalculable advantages to the large number of pupils who have passed through them. I need scarcely say that the foregoing representations would apply with still greater force in the event of fees being levied from pupils who have passed the Fourth Standard.

Aided or Subsidised Schools.—The rule of the Otago Board in regard to such schools is as follows: "The Board will not maintain any school in which the number of pupils in average attendance is below twenty; but it may, at its discretion, continue and subsidise, or establish and subsidise, schools in districts where the prescribed number of pupils cannot be reached; but such subsidy shall in no case exceed the total Government allowance earned by the average attendance at the school, and its payment will be conditional on a minimum salary of £100 being guaranteed by the managers of the subsidised school in the case of a male and £70 in the case of a female." At the close of last year (1886) there were ten aided or subsidised schools and six half-time schools in the Otago District. The 88th section of the Act of 1877 confers on Education Boards very full discretion as regards providing for the wants of outlying districts.

With scarcely an exception the aided schools in Otago are in charge of mistresses, nearly all of whom are intelligent and skilled teachers, who were first trained as pupil-teachers and thereafter as students of the normal school. With the limited resources likely to be at the disposal of Education Boards in future, it would be a wise step, in my opinion, to take advantage to a much larger extent than in the past of the services of the comparatively large number of young women who have acquired a respectable amount of scholarship and received an admirable professional training by means of our public schools and our normal institutions. I believe that such young women may be more largely employed both as heads of our smaller schools and as mistresses or assistants in our larger ones. I know that the benefits derived from attendance at the normal institution in Dunedin are not confined to the Otago District: not a few of the ex-students are now occupying positions of usefulness as teachers in other parts of the colony.

Reduction of Expenditure.—I am unable to come to any conclusion in my own mind as to the means by which any considerable reduction could be made in the expenditure on the public-school system without greatly impairing its efficiency. The question is fully discussed in the latter portion of Mr. Habens's statement of the 15th November already referred to, and I am disposed to agree with that gentleman in the views he has expressed in that statement. I cannot see that the abolition of Education Boards would result in much or any saving to the Government; while, from the configuration of the country, the drawbacks attending the administration of local business by the head office in Wellington would greatly overbalance any advantages that could possibly be gained. If Boards were abolished it would be found necessary to enlarge the powers and responsibilities, and consequently the working expenses, of the School Committees. In numerous instances the clerical work of School Committees is at present performed gratuitously, and the working expenses are trifling; whereas, with increased responsibilities and multiplication of duties, the clerical and other office expenses would necessarily become greater. Besides, if Boards were abolished, it would be necessary to employ officers of the central department, with a larger or smaller number of clerks, in nearly all the present Board-centres; and even any material reduction in the number of local officers would probably necessitate the employment of a larger staff in the head office. Then, again, the necessity that would no doubt arise for frequent reference to head-quarters in Wellington would occasion much delay and inconvenience. With the exception that I consider Education Boards necessary for some time longer, I agree entirely with Mr. Habens in the opinion he expresses as to the usefulness of Boards. (Reply to Question 68.)

The Syllabus.—I am unable to suggest any material improvement in the Syllabus now in force. I think, however, that grammar might with advantage be made a class subject, the same as has been done in regard to history and geography. It must be admitted that the reasons for this change are not so strong as in the case of the two last-named subjects; but, as an Inspector, I believe I should be able to judge more accurately of the extent of the pupils' information and the quality of the instruction imparted by a half-hour's *vivâ voce* examination of a class in grammar than by means of an examination paper necessarily covering only a very small amount of the work that may have been gone over, for such paper, whether answered correctly or incorrectly, might give an inadequate and unreliable indication of the nature and amount of the work done. The very

high percentage of marks gained in the class subjects, drawing, history, and geography, shows, in so far as the Otago schools are concerned, that these subjects receive a large share of attention, notwithstanding the fears expressed on this point by the Inspector-General in the first section of his memorandum of the 29th January, 1885. I believe, however, that if the Education Department were in a position to issue authoritative instructions to the Inspectors and schools, it would be found possible to secure examination of schools of a more satisfactory character as regards class subjects, as well as pass subjects and additional subjects.

The satisfactory results that seem to have attended the giving of marks for proficiency in each of the class subjects and additional subjects suggest to me the advisability of considering whether the system of marks might not be still further extended with advantage. Parents, members of School Committees, and others judge very much of the results of the teacher's labours by the number or percentage of marks or passes secured at the Inspector's examination, and the question may be fairly asked, How does the school stand as regards such important matters as the order, attention, and manners of the scholars, and the tone, the discipline, and the general efficiency of the school? These are of as much importance as the possession of a certain amount of information in such subjects as grammar, geography, &c. It might be quite possible for a competent and careful Inspector to gauge with a fair approximation to accuracy the amount of credit to which a school might be entitled in regard to such important matters as those I have mentioned.

A careful perusal of the examination reports of the Otago Inspectors of Schools, and the knowledge I have gained during the past twelve months of the practical working of the Syllabus in the case of three young grandchildren attending a public school, in whose progress I take a personal interest, warrant me in expressing the very decided belief that the requirements of the Syllabus can be met very fairly on the whole by a school where the organization and the method of instruction are judicious, the teacher or teachers earnest of purpose and fairly competent, and the examination by the Inspector conducted in a reasonable and wise manner. I believe that undeserved discredit has been too often brought upon the Syllabus from the examination test being out of all proportion to the demands of the Syllabus, and, perhaps, more frequently from the lack of interest and earnestness of purpose, if not of intelligence and skill, on the part of the teacher.

On perusing the Otago Inspector's examination reports, I have been often surprised at the striking success of the small country schools with only one teacher in meeting the requirements of the Syllabus. I am disposed, however, to recommend for consideration the question whether Inspectors should not be instructed and authorised to make a concession, if asked for, in the case of such small schools, as regards the number of compulsory subjects, which might be restricted to reading and explanation, spelling and dictation, writing, arithemetic, and composition for individual examination and passes, and to such class subjects as might be reasonably expected to be overtaken.

An experienced Inspector has informed me that the following recommendation, made to the Education Committee by the Otago Educational Institute, might be given effect to with advantage, viz.: "That any two successive standards may be presented together in reading, writing, composition, geography," and perhaps other subjects. The object sought to be attained by the Otago Institute in the following recommendation is certainly a desirable one, but I do not see how it can be effected. It is, "That the method of tabulating the results of inspection for each school should be such as would do away with over-anxiety on the part of teachers to secure high percentages."

I have now come to the conclusion from recent experience that under the Syllabus regulations teachers are permitted ample liberty with regard to methods of teaching, and that no unreasonable restraint is laid upon the individual tendencies and differential capabilities of the pupils. I am assured that in the Otago District the Inspectors do not interfere with the methods of instruction followed by the different teachers, provided the methods are really educative. I take this opportunity to state that I was not a member of the Otago Education Board when its report on the Syllabus was adopted and forwarded to the Minister of Education in order that it might be laid before Parliament, otherwise I should have opposed its adoption in anything like its present form. I am the more anxious to make this statement because I have recently perused the replies upon which the report purports to have been based.

The Teaching of Elementary Science.—I feel confident that the reply of Mr. Habens to the Committee's question No. 73 would have the effect of removing much misconception as to what is required and expected under the Syllabus regulations with respect to the nature of the instruction to be given under the class subject, Elementary Science and Object-lessons, if a copy of the reply were extensively circulated throughout the colony.

I have, &c.,
JOHN HISLOP.

Mr. J. H. POPE to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Wellington, 9th November, 1887.

I have the honour to forward the following replies to the questions contained in your circular of the 10th ultimo, and, in accordance with your verbal directions, to add a brief statement with regard to the Native schools of New Zealand.

1. The first question in the circular, when addressed to a person occupying my point of view, immediately assumes this form: At what age is it desirable that a child's education should be begun by the State? The reply is that, if suitable appliances are available, school-education can hardly be begun too early. It seems to me obvious that the sooner the faculties of the child can be subjected to well-devised systematic training, the greater must be the chance of the child's acquiring orderly and accurate habits of thought, speech, and action, and the fewer will be the facilities and opportunities for the development of those unmethodical and lawless tendencies which are to be found to a greater or less extent in all children, and which are the source of most of the irregularities and troubles of after life. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that, unless full play is allowed

to a child's vital forces, a good physical development is not to be expected. Diligent attention to a child's mind, and neglect of his body, will be very likely to yield, as a final result, a set of cultivated mental faculties without the physical energy necessary for the satisfactory use of them.

I believe, then, that children of three or four years of age may attend a kindergarten or a well-equipped infant school, having appliances for promoting the physical as well as the mental development of children, with very great advantage; but if a school has no such appliances, and if attendance at it involves continuous mental application for four or five hours a day (as must be the case in country schools, taught by one, or at most, two teachers), I think that children should not begin to attend it until they are at least six years old; perhaps seven would be better.

On the whole, therefore, it seems to me that, in so far as the raising of the age upon which capitation allowance is paid would lead to the discontinuance of infant schools, the effect of the step would be bad; but that, in so far as it would tend to prevent very young children from being made to submit, without the proper physical safeguards, to the restraints of ordinary school-life, and from being made to do ordinary standard school-work, the effect would be decidedly beneficial.

2. As far as I can see, the principal effects produced by exacting payment of fees for instruction in the higher standards would be to lessen very materially the number that would receive instruction in these standards; and as, in perhaps the majority of cases, the children thus deprived of the opportunity of completing their education up to the prescribed limits at the expense of the State, and compelled to pay fees for this completion, would belong to parents who contributed more than the average amount of the cost of the system, the charging of fees for the higher standards would at once alter the present position of affairs, and make the free part of the system "charitable" rather than "co-operative." Children, too, would quickly learn to recognise the distinction between families having paying children at school and those having none. The effect of this and of any similar distinctions would probably be very bad.

I cannot say what would be the effect on the cost to the Government of charging fees for instruction in the higher standards, but, as far as the community as a whole is concerned, it is easy to see that the result would be that the total quantity of education given would be decreased, and the proportionate cost of it increased, unless, indeed, it can be maintained that the community as a whole has no interest in securing for its children more than the merest rudiments of education, and that any saving in the outlay required to produce higher results is a real saving to the community. I must leave the purely financial aspect of this question to be dealt with by those who are more familiar with it than I am.

3. Assuming that by the expression "more economical working of the Act" is meant the maintaining of the present standard of efficiency at a smaller cost, I should say that, while it is not only possible, but probable, that savings could be effected in various directions by means of cautious and well-considered consolidation and organization, any sudden substantial reduction would inevitably lead to more than corresponding impairment of the efficiency of the system, and would consequently produce increase of relative, along with decrease of absolute, cost. Any scheme that may be initiated for securing a more economical working of the Act should, I think, be devised with the view of securing greater uniformity in the results obtained through the expenditure of equal amounts of State effort, of guarding against the establishment of expensive schools requiring expensive teachers, when teachers of lower grade, and receiving smaller salaries, could satisfy all real needs; and, generally, of preventing the over-development of the system in districts whose actual wants are small, and of making the payments by the State bear a truer proportion to the results achieved than they do at present.

4. I do not think that it would be wise to make any changes in the Syllabus until it has been long enough in operation to produce tangible results. It is easy enough to suggest changes on what may be called purely *a priori* grounds, but such suggestions can have but little value. There is, however, one point on which I feel justified in speaking with some confidence, and that is the probable origin of many of the objections that are made to the Syllabus. I am quite certain that many of these objections are caused not by the provisions of the Syllabus itself, but by the way in which it is interpreted. While examining children of European parents who have gone to live in Maori districts after having been in the neighbourhood of Board schools for some years, I have found that a pass under one Board is a very different thing from a pass under another Board. The inequalities thus manifested would cover at least a standard and a half. This shows that the readings of the Syllabus by different Inspectors vary widely; and, assuming that the average reading is correct, the inference is that some Inspectors exact more, and some are contented with less, than the amount of instruction actually required by the standards. It is extremely probable, therefore, that complaints with regard to the Syllabus are, to a considerable extent, caused by the fact that under some Boards more knowledge of the details of certain subjects is demanded than the Syllabus really asks for. The suggestion that I have to make with regard to this matter is that some means should be devised for making the interpretation of the Syllabus both reasonable and uniform throughout the colony. If this were done, and if a fair trial of the Syllabus for five or six years were made, it would then most likely be possible to effect really beneficial alterations in it—alterations based on experience of the results obtained by its use, and not on plausible but haphazard proposals for remedying its supposed defects.

With reference to Native schools I shall merely deal with a few points which seem to be relevant to the present inquiry, leaving it to the Committee to ask for any further information that may be thought necessary.

The working average attendance at Native village schools for the year 1886 was 2019·73, and the total expenditure on them was £14,360 8s., the average cost per head being a trifle less than £7 2s. Besides this amount, £6,773 15s. 8d. was expended on new school-buildings, higher education, and apprenticeship, and on the school at Chatham Islands. The total expenditure on Native education, therefore, was £21,134 3s. 8d.

The reasons why the expenditure, per head, on children educated in Native village schools is relatively high are as follow: (*a.*) There are no large schools; the highest average at any school was fifty-six, and there were only three schools with an average of more than fifty. The average attendance at all the seventy-five schools open during the year was only 26·9 for each. (*b.*) As Native schools are intended to be not merely schools, but also civilising agencies and centres for spreading European ideas and habits amongst the Natives, it is absolutely necessary to give fair salaries, to provide satisfactory residences and school-glebes, and to pay reasonable attention to the comforts and convenience of teachers in order that suitable persons may be attracted to the service and kept in it when they have learnt their business. (*c.*) Books, stationery, prizes, &c., have to be provided for the pupils, because, in most cases, it would be useless to expect Maori parents to make such provision. (*d.*) Owing to to the isolated position of most of the schools, the cost of everything connected with the service tends to be higher than in the case of European schools of corresponding rank.

Any material reduction in the salaries of Native-school teachers would be almost certain to lead to the withdrawal of the best teachers from the service; in any case, Native-school work would cease to attract suitable persons, and the staff would rapidly deteriorate. There is, I feel sure, no branch of the public service in which it is more important to have honest and faithful workers that it is in this. From the very nature of the work, teachers in Native schools are left almost entirely without direct supervision, and in many cases the only effective check on their work is afforded by the Inspector's annual examinations. Under such circumstances it is plain that, if possible, men should be got who will do their work whether they are supervised or not; such men cannot be induced to occupy for long positions that will not afford them adequate remuneration. Besides this, I may say that, while I consider a successful Native school a most valuable institution, and well worth all the money that may be spent upon it, a Native school under an indolent or incompetent master is the most useless of all educational institutions, the effect of it being to make the Natives disgusted with education, and finally thoroughly hostile to schools and all connected with them. In my opinion, therefore, any attempt that may be made to reduce the cost of Native schools should take the form of a reduction in the number of schools, by the closing of those schools that are not doing satisfactory work. The number of such schools is very small, but there are a few that never have been, and are never likely to be, worth the money expended upon them. Of course it is easy to understand that the establishment of a Native school is, to some extent, an experiment, and that it is often impossible to predict with certainty the success or failure of a school asked for by, and established in accordance with the wishes of, the Natives of any particular district. Great care has been taken by the department to establish no useless schools; this care has been rewarded by satisfactory, but not complete, success. I think that there are two tests that should be applied when the question of the closing of a school as a village school has been raised; these are: first, the average attendance; and, secondly, the standard passes obtained by the school. Failure to satisfy the first of these tests should lead to the closing of the school, failure to do satisfactory work should cause the school to be brought down to the ranks of a subsidised school in the first place, and should the failure continue the school ought to be closed.

I think that there is only one other question that needs to be dealt with here. It is sometimes asked why Native schools cannot be managed by the Boards of the districts in which they are situated. The answer is that the modes of teaching, managing, and examining young Maoris must necessarily be altogether different from those used in dealing with white children. Specialisation of function is evidently needed, and nothing but specialisation of organ can fully satisfy the need. It seems to me that any attempt to do Native-school work by means of an organization intended for widely different purposes must necessarily be a failure.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Committee. JAMES H. POPE.

Mr. M. COHEN to the CHAIRMAN, Education Committee.

SIR,— Dunedin, December, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th November, covering a circular from the Education Committee, and, in reply to the latter, I have to say that I regret exceedingly that I am not able, owing to the press of business, to give as full replies to your questions as the importance of the subject demands. My personal experience is confined to a little over four years' service on two of the largest Committees in Dunedin; but I have endeavoured, by close study of the educational literature at my command, to make myself familiar with the working of the systems in vogue in Australia and elsewhere. It must, therefore, be understood that such opinions as I venture to offer are mainly based on a comparison with such means as I have indicated of other school-systems with our own.

I may be permitted to say, at the outset, that for some time past I have been endeavouring, with the assistance of a number of fellow-workers in this district, to obtain legislative sanction to a number of amendments of the administrative clauses of the Education Act; and that some of the suggestions I am about to make will lose their force if the Act be not amended.

1. I have always urged that the school-age should be raised in the large towns. I am of opinion that no child under seven years should enter our primary schools; but, with the knowledge that under existing conditions such a plan would lead to the closing of the schools in sparsely-populated districts, I would favour, as a tentative measure, the raising of the age to six years in the towns. A capitation grant of £3 15s. ought, even then, to furnish sufficient to maintain both classes of schools; but I apprehend that if the Legislature, in its wisdom, should decide to cast on School Committees or local bodies in charge of education the duty of maintaining efficiently the schools intrusted to their management, it will either take care to make provision for enabling that function to be properly undertaken, or, failing that, will make a direct vote for the purpose. But I

contend that the cause of education will benefit materially by the exclusion of "infants" from our primary schools. I am an ardent advocate of the kindergarten system, which I hope yet to see made the initial grade of our education scheme. My reading on this subject and study of such admittedly-imperfect methods as have been brought under my notice have convinced me that th kindergarten is the best plan for the training and teaching of infants. People who do not understand it characterize it as "child's-play," pure and simple; but I hold that, if the physical and mental conditions of our children are to be taken into account, there is not enough play and pleasantness in the school-life of our infants. To use the words of an experienced English teacher: "The kindergarten ought to be looked on as a supplement to home-life, not as a substitute for it, except in the case of those neglected ones in whose homes bad influences prevail. For a part of the day it offers advantages which even the home does not. Owing to its gentle discipline, its large family, and its practised staff, it can do in some ways more than the home alone can do as a preparation for school and life." The system by enabling the infant to understand everything that is taught imparts a solid foundation for what is taught in the primary school, as, with its eye trained to form, and its hands to mechanical uses, the child will go out from the kindergarten well prepared to master the elementary principles of design, and with its powers of observation sharpened. It is further claimed for the system that it presents the pupil to the primary-school teacher with its mind so strengthened as to make its progress through the work of the standards very marked; indeed, it is asserted, for example, that "a child need only commence to learn to read when seven or eight years of age, but, owing to his kindergarten training, he will pass by one who may have learned reading several years earlier, but who has never had a regular course of object-lessons." Again, "arithmetic is taught during the first year wholly with things, and the results are most remarkable." I mention these things because I am aware that some authorities in this colony ridicule the system and refuse to believe in its efficacy. To them I would make reply that there must be some real merit in a system that in America alone has in a decade attained an undeniable position in the national scheme, as the following figures show:—

	Number of Schools.	Number of Teachers.	Number of Pupils.
1874...	55 ...	125 ...	1,636
1884...	354 ...	831 ...	17,002

The adoption of the kindergarten in our chief cities ought to follow immediately on the raising of the school-age, as otherwise a large number of children will in all probability be allowed to roam the streets. There are, I fear, far too many children continually absent from school now, and any step that tended to increase that number must be deplored. Another objection to the kindergarten that I have heard advanced is that it cannot be grafted on to our common-school system. Is not the experience of countries wherein the system has been in operation for some time rather the other way? Commissioner Eaton, of the United States Education Bureau, gives his own testimony, and that of other leading educationists, to the success of the experiment wherever it has been tried *(vide* report for 1883–84); and Professor Hughes, Superintendent of Schools at Toronto, Canada, addressing a convention at the World's Industrial Exposition at New Orleans in 1885, said, "We have in Toronto, to a certain extent, solved the problem between the kindergarten and the public-school system. . . . When we decided to introduce the kindergarten into our schools we decided to introduce it permanently, and not as an experiment merely. So we took this teacher (who had been through the Albany Normal School, who had had some years' experience in primary work, and had spent two years teaching), paid her $600 a year, and sent her to St. Louis. She came back fully prepared to fulfil her work; she is doing it now, and doing it admirably. We have now two distinct kindergartens in our city instructed by her, in which she spends alternate weeks; and we would have more if we had teachers prepared to conduct them. . . . Our work is a success so far as it has gone; but two years is altogether too short a time to settle it as a success. . . . I am also glad to announce that we have taken another departure by establishing free kindergartens. Outside of Toronto the only town or city in Ontario in which the kindergarten has been placed is the Town of Portland. It has been conducted there for three years, and gives complete satisfaction to the trustees and the parents of the children. . . . We expect that the kindergarten will be introduced into all the other cities and towns of the province as rapidly as we can procure trained teachers. We believe in it. We believe in the organic union of the public school and the kindergarten, and we believe in accomplishing that union by the modification of the public school instead of by the modification of the kindergarten itself." In Geneva, Switzerland, according to Mr. John Hitz, with a population of sixty thousand, no less than four thousand of the school-children attend the kindergartens, which are highly esteemed. Testimony of this kind to the value of the system and to its claim to be regarded as the most rational plan of infant instruction could be multiplied if time and space permitted; but, before leaving this question, I may be allowed to call attention to the significant fact that the authorities of the other colonies are evidently alive to the merits of the system. For example, the Education Department has decided to obtain the services of two highly-trained kindergarteners, with the object of giving the necessary instruction in the Melbourne Training College, and facilitating the adoption of the system there. Tasmania has also lately established kindergarten schools as part of its national system, and also subsidises private schools of the same character. I regret that I am unable to refer, as I had hoped to be able, to the contention that the expense of the kindergarten system will prove a bar to its adoption here. I had expected to be in possession ere this of authoritative figures showing the cost of maintaining these schools in some of the large towns of the United States, but they have not come to hand. When they reach me they shall be forwarded to the Chairman of the Committee. Without them I do not care to express an opinion definitely. If, however, the question of expense can be satisfactorily settled, I think I have advanced some reasons why our youth will be advantaged educationally if they are not permitted to enter the primary schools before they are six years old.

Coming now to the primary schools, I think I am warranted in saying that the children who

have entered from the kindergartens ought, by reason of their previous training, to be able to pass the compulsory standard, even under the existing Syllabus, in less time than it now takes. This is an important consideration, as my experience leads me to conclude that many of our children—far too many in fact—leave school without going through all the standards: indeed, the bulk of them leave either just before or shortly after passing the Fourth Standard. Without entering on the question of the Syllabus at any length, I should like to see a revision of it, in the direction of moulding it to suit the requirements of the great mass of our children, brought about by the means that I shall have occasion to refer to later. I believe the allegation to be well founded that there is a waste of time and power in preparing the infants for the First-Standard pass, and that, consequently, there is not opportunity during the rest of the time that the children remain in the school to get through the other standards creditably. The Syllabus was recently altered for the better, but, in my humble opinion, it must be still further modified and simplified in order to produce general satisfaction. I may mention here that my views hereon were communicated to the Otago Education Board, whose Committee did me the honour of consulting me last year; and I beg to refer you to the report issued by that Board. I may now add that I should be glad to see pretty stiff tests as to efficiency of all the classes in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, English composition, and drawing (which I regard as of equal value with writing); provided always that the latter is taught by competent instructors, and that passage in at least three of these subjects should reckon as a "compulsory" pass. Further, I wish to see grammar and geography, together with history, excluded from all standards below the Fifth. In respect to what are called the "optional" subjects, the teacher should have the widest choice, and be encouraged to give the fullest play to his own specialties, and to "work up" the material he knows he has at hand. I know that in my own schools are boys and girls who have developed strong tastes for particular studies, which their masters would have delighted to foster, but the dead level to which the Syllabus reduces everything effectually stops that. Make the Syllabus more elastic in these respects, and let the Inspectors examine orally, and indicate the value of the teaching given in the optional subjects, according as results may be "excellent, "good," or "indifferent," instead of by the baneful plan of percentages, and I am confident that none but the happiest results will follow.

If the desired amendments in the Act are not made, I should favour the continuance of Education Boards, but hope for a better division than exists of the functions of Boards and Committees, in order to prevent the friction that unfortunately has too frequently prevailed. But, if there is provided a better mode of election of Committees, together with a stricter definition of the franchise, I wholly fail to see why, subject to conditions hereafter referred to, the School Committees should not be intrusted with the entire charge of matters educational within their own districts. The alterations in the mode of election will, I am convinced, lead to the best men of the district devoting themselves to the administration, especially if important functions—including the administration of locally-raised revenues—are confided to them. Believing in the potentiality of direct taxation to secure economic administration, as the expenditure is brought more immediately under the scrutiny of those who supply the funds, I should welcome the charge of education, within strictly specified limits, being handed over to the local bodies, with power given to them to raise locally the revenues they require. The advantages of this plan were so forcibly stated before the Victorian Royal Commission on Education that I am tempted to invite the Committee's attention to the evidence of Professor Elkington, of Melbourne University, and of Mr. Harper, M.L.A., on this very point. First, the Professor said: "Do you think that parents would take a greater interest if they had to pay a small fee in the nature of a local rate?—I am strongly of opinion that that is the proper mode of sustaining the schools. I have always been of that opinion; before our Education Act was passed I recommended it over and over again to my superiors. The objection to school-fees is that there were a number of poor children unable to pay them. Now, the rating would get over that, and prevent the notion that they were getting something for nothing. One reason of the comparative indifference in regard to parental control is the absence of fees. The application of a rate would have the same effect in regard to schools as the rating for roads and bridges: a man wants a road and sees that he gets it, knowing that having paid his rates he has given a consideration for it. Another effect of placing the schools under the control of local bodies would be that the local machinery would do all the work of compulsion. Truant-inspectors would not be wanted. The local police could do that along with their ordinary work in visiting about the district. That item of expense would be saved, and better service would be rendered, because the statistics of school-population are confessedly faulty. If such large powers were thrown on the municipal bodies . . . . it would tend to improve municipal representation. I would make the local body the employers of the teachers. The rating system of paying salaries by localities would lead to very considerable increment of the teachers. A good man, with an opportunity of showing his merits in his own constituency, and having an opportunity of their being appreciated, would be certainly well paid; and I may mention incidentally that it would get rid of the whole difficulty as to classification of teachers. Classification would be dealt with on the principle of supply and demand—the best teachers would have the best schools in the best localities."

Mr. Andrew Harper's evidence I rely on as demonstrating how "order and discontent" have sprung out of "discord and dissatisfaction" in Canada. He says, *inter alia*, that, "The whole system of Canada is arranged on the basis that each municipality or township is supposed to manage its own educational affairs. Each Committee and local body in charge of educational matters is a corporation, and has the power to levy rates on the inhabitants of a district. The amount to be raised is fixed by the persons elected. . . . Local control has in no way destroyed the national character of the system, because inspection is provided by the Dominion Government, and teachers have to receive their certificates from the Central Department. The Governments supply all the tests of efficiency, and, if the local body does not satisfy the Government on these points, the Government can come into the district and take the whole of the schools nto their hands."

I need not do more than refer the Committee to the admirable papers read at the New Orleans Centennial Education Convention for corroborative evidence of the benefits of a direct local tax for school-purposes. Canada's experience is that of most of the great States of the Union. An esteemed correspondent, formerly a teacher in the Melbourne schools, but now resident in Ohio, says that the schools in that State are sustained by contributions from the State funds, supplemented by a small tax on all taxable property in the cities and districts, and that the local tax is cheerfully and willingly paid. See also Mr. Matthew Arnold's special report (1886) on Continental school-systems, from which it would appear that Germany, possessing the most perfect scheme of all, imposes fees, except in the great municipal districts, which, having levied a municipal tax for the purpose, are able to throw their schools open to all.

I am afraid that the time is most inopportune for the reimposition of fees, though, if the power to tax locally, as suggested above, be not conceded, I am of opinion that fees ought to be charged for the Sixth Standard. I have already expressed my opinion that the great bulk of our children do not go up to that standard; therefore the cry that the poorer children would be affected by the change has no foundation in fact. After ten years' freedom parents may feel it a hardship to have again to pay fees, but I think comparatively few will after a while feel the strain, and those few will ultimately admit the reasonableness of the charge. I have steadfastly opposed the entire abolition of fees, which was, I think, a great mistake. Fees were always charged when the province had charge of education, and I am prepared to say that those fees were invariably paid with cheerfulness. The Committees had always a discretionary power, which was judiciously exercised, and where the fees could not be paid remisssons were granted at once. Holding, as I do, that relatively few people will be affected—and these are mostly well able to bear the charge—by the proposal to charge fees for the higher standards, I cannot see how much economy can be effected in this direction.

I strongly favour the placing of the Inspectors under the Education Department, and the Inspectors exchanging districts periodically, not necessarily leaving the localities where they have resided for a time, but going into each other's districts at intervals, and conducting the examinations therein. I am desirous of seeing the Inspector-General carrying out what I humbly believe to be the true functions of his office, namely, directing and controlling the inspectorial staff, and supervising the work of inspection wherever practicable. I should also to like to see the Inspectors meeting in conference every year or second year, under the presidency of the Inspector-General, conferring as to the working of the Syllabus, and making to the Minister such recommendations as to its working, and the state of education generally, as the circumstances warrant. The Teachers' Convention meets at the end of the year, and a free conference with a delegation from that body would, I am sure, help to a better understanding between the Inspectors and teachers. By the Inspectors meeting in conference uniformity of inspection, which is much needed, would be secured.

I disapprove of the proposal to abolish the training colleges. They are necessary adjuncts of the system. That in Dunedin, the only one with which I am actually acquainted, is doing good work at a reasonable cost. As the permanence of our scheme of education must be dependent on there being a supply of fully-trained young teachers, I should regard the closing of the training colleges as a retrograde movement.

My remarks so far have been directed more to the possibilities of improving our scheme of primary instruction than to obtaining economy in its administration. I have endeavoured to show that there cannot be any large saving in the adoption of any of the reforms I have discussed. Where, then, can savings be effected? As I hold strongly that nothing ought to be done to cripple our primary scheme, it goes almost without saying that I look to secondary and the higher education to provide the best scope for the exercise of retrenchment. Firstly, I say that the secondary schools should be wholly self-supporting; and next that the university scheme is much too elaborate for the necessities of our people. With such a revision of the highest standards in our primaries as would enable the scholarship-children leaving them to at once take their proper places in the secondary schools, which at present they do not do, owing to them being necessarily weak in classics and mathematics, I would urge that the work of our secondary schools should begin where the Fifth Standard of our primary leaves off, and that no pupil should be allowed in a secondary school who has not passed an examination equal to the Fifth-Standard pass. It is, I think, a fair complaint that the two systems overlap to some extent; and that many boys are now admitted into the secondary schools who would fail to pass even a Fourth-Standard examination. I also advocate the extension of our scholarship-system for the purpose of carrying into our secondary schools all boys and girls who distinguish themselves in the primaries and are desirous of further prosecuting their studies. In this connection I may be pardoned for suggesting that the scholarship-competition should be open to all. Its restriction to the pupils of the State schools does not appear to me to be equitable. The scholarship should go to any boy or girl who can win in fair, open competition, and as I read the Act that seems to have been the intention of the Legislature, because it is enacted that Boards may practically make the competitions open. Indeed, the North Canterbury Education Board up to 1882 similarly interpreted the Act and threw their scholarships open to all comers. By this means we should have a healthy rivalry between the State and private or denominational schools; and the taxpayer would be enabled to test the question often raised, viz., whether he is getting full value for his money. The creation of a specific number of open scholarships would, in my opinion, be a step in the right direction.

Just one other subject, on which I feel very strongly, and which I sincerely trust will be fully considered by the Committee. To all intents and purposes the compulsory clauses of the Act are a dead-letter; and I believe that only in Auckland is an attempt now being made to enforce them. In Dunedin I have served on two Committees who have endeavoured to check truancy, but the attempt was made in vain, because of the difficulties in the way of obtaining legal proof necessary to obtain conviction, and because the Committees will not incur the odium of prose-

cuting in such cases. The whole question has been admirably stated by Mr. Worthington, of Auckland, who, in an address to the New Zealand Educational Institute, said,—and I indorse his statement generally,—"If our system of instruction is to be truly national, we must see that all who are of school-age are congregated within our schoolrooms. I am aware that I shall be told that the proportion of the absentee children is very small, that even investigations have been made which prove this; but I assert that these investigations, such as they were, prove nothing, as they stopped short of comparison of the obtained results with the school-rolls of the districts in which they were made. I know, from personal knowledge and observation, that within the City of Auckland alone between two and three hundred children of school-age can be found whose names are not to be seen on any school-roll, nor are the children engaged in what may be termed any kind of industrial pursuit."

It does not, in large towns like Dunedin, require the periodical reports of the police to tell us of the existence of this daily-growing evil. One is brought face to face with it almost hourly in the busiest parts of the city. These children are mostly of tender years, but appear to be strangers to parental control; and, if allowed to go on their present course unchecked, must in the near future swell the ranks of our dangerous and criminal classes. Colonel Templeton, Chairman of the Victorian Education Commission, puts it: "The root of the evil is the indifference of many parents to the educational welfare of their children. Parents, who are naturally indolent or without means of reflection, permit their children to stay at home on the most frivolous pretext or no pretext at all; and it does not appear that there is any direct means of interfering with such people, and compelling them to do their duty. The compulsory clauses of the Education Act seem inoperative, chiefly because Committees will not incur the odium of putting it in force against their neighbours. If this problem is to be solved by the exercise of compulsion, it is, I believe, the Parliament of the colony, and not the Committee of the school, that must take upon itself the responsibility of enforcing attendance."

So I contend that the State having charged itself with the duty is bound to see that every child shall at some school receive such instruction in elementary subjects as will qualify it to enter on the struggle for existence; and the State must provide the requisite machinery for that special purpose. Where such has been done the results are appreciable. Auckland has its truant-inspector, who has brought a large number of the street-waifs into the truant-school, and been the means of materially increasing the attendance at the State schools of that city. It is worthy of mention that a systematic attempt recently made in Victoria to check truancy has resulted in the reduction of the number of defaulters from 5·3 in 1882 to 2·5 in 1886. I take leave of this subject by suggesting that our Factories Act ought to be amended in the direction of providing that no person should be allowed to work in a factory, &c., unless he shall at least have passed the Fourth Standard.

The Chairman, Education Committee, Wellington, M. Cohen.

EXTRACTS FROM THE *WESTMINSTER REVIEW*, JANUARY, 1887.

The main body of the information presented in this article has been culled from a report of the Commissioner of Education published in 1884, and two "Circulars of Information," also published by the Bureau of Education within the last two years. Most of the passages marked with quotation marks are from these same sources, and some other passages are taken almost *verbatim*.

The legal school age in most of the States is from six years to eighteen or twenty. This high figure, however, includes the high school teaching, which falls under secondary education, and for which provision is only made in some of the cities.

The elementary course of instruction is so arranged as to its stages, and the amount of work to be done, that the average pupil may complete it at the age of fourteen. There is remarkable uniformity among the States in fixing upon this age of fourteen as the termination of elementary education. In both England and France pupils are expected to finish the course a year earlier.

The current expenses of the State public schools are defrayed almost entirely by State and local taxes. To take California for an example, we learn that there "the public schools are sustained by a State poll-tax of section 2 on each male inhabitant over twenty-one and under sixty years of age, except paupers, &c., to be used for paying teachers; a county tax not to exceed 50 cents on 100 dollars; and a district tax not to exceed 70 cents on 100 dollars for building, or 30 cents on 100 dollars for other school purposes." In other States a fixed portion (in Missouri 25 per cent.) of the entire State revenue is devoted to education, in addition to local taxes. In some few States there are endowments, but in no case does the income derived from these latter form an important element in the total revenue. The public schools of the United States are supported almost entirely from direct taxation.

The schools in cities are under the control of Local Boards, which differ greatly in different cities as to their mode of election, tenure of office, powers, and duties, but which in the main represent the will of the people in reference to the maintenance of education. The size of this Local Board is various: in Boston it has reached the number of 116, but generally the number, even in large centres, is much smaller. The Boards are generally constituted by State laws; the members are elected by popular vote to represent wards of cities, and to hold office for two or three years, one-half or one-third being elected every year. At first sight it may appear that English School Boards, by the popular mode of their election, place the public education as much under the control of the democracy as is the case in America. The great difference, however, consists in the fact that, while English School Boards have to administer an elaborate system imposed by the central authority, retaining but slight powers of modification, and that in matters of detail, the American City Boards are invested with a far wider authority.

There are nominally three grades in city schools—the primary, grammar, and high. The primary and grammar courses, however, taken together, constitute the elementary course, and may be treated together; they form the real basis of public instruction in the United States, and by their success the educational condition of the country as a whole must be tested. The high school belongs to secondary education, and, although of growing importance, extends its influence as yet to but a small proportion of the whole community. The elementary course, as before stated, is so arranged that the pupil completes it at the age of fourteen. The lower limit of age is not the same in all cities, being almost equally divided between five and six. The eight or nine years thus allotted to elementary education are differently divided in different cities. In most New England cities the primary course comprises three years for pupils from five to eight years of age, while the grammar course comprises six years. In St. Louis the whole course of public instruction is divided into three periods of four years each, the primary, grammar, and high courses, each occupying one of these periods. In other cities five years are given to the lower grade and three to the grammar or intermediate course. In most cities the high schools constitute a separate establishment, and it will be convenient for us to consider them separately later on, and to here confine our attention to the primary and grammar schools. These latter are, in the Western States, commonly conducted under the same principal and in the same building, whereas in the Middle and Eastern States they are generally separate institutions.

"In New York the primary schools are very large establishments, some schools containing as many as fifteen hundred pupils. In Boston, on the other hand, the primary schools are intended to be establishments of moderate size, the maximum primary building erected in recent years containing not more than eight school rooms.

"From one to three or four of these neighbourhood primary schools are grouped around each grammar school, in locations best adapted to accommodate the pupils, the master of the grammar school exercising the function of principal of these schools."

Most cities are divided into districts, and the pupil is obliged to attend the school in the district where he lives. New York, however, is an exception to this rule; for there, though each ward forms a district for school purposes, the attendance of the pupils is not restricted to any particular school.

"Hence the schools of New York, especially the grammar schools, have come to have a more marked individuality than those of other cities. One school, for instance, gets a reputation for fitting its pupils for the high school, while others become noted for fitting their pupils for practical business."

We should much like to quote a schedule now before us, drawn up for the use of elementary schools in Boston for 1877–78; but want of space will oblige us to content ourselves with drawing attention to a few points deserving of special notice.

(*a.*) The hours given to reading are not consumed merely in enabling the pupils to acquire a mechanical habit, but give an acquaintance with pieces of good sound literature. Americans claim a great superiority in their reading books over those used in England so far as the matter is concerned.

(*b.*) Several hours a week are occupied in what is termed oral instruction. Under this heading is included not only what we call object lessons—elementary teaching in physical science—but useful information of every kind which may aid in fitting the pupils for active employments. Without some such attempt, it is only too likely that the schooling which is forcibly thrust on the young will be dropped almost entirely by them when grown up, and fail to achieve any permanent effect on their life and character. This oral instruction, and the miscellaneous teaching attached thereto, have a humanising influence which is wanting from the more mechanical English code. In connection with this same thought we may allude to the fact that drawing and music are deemed not mere ornaments, or "accomplishments," as the superficial term it, but an integral part of the training of an American citizen—one which will give him a fuller, healthier, and therefore more useful life.

(*c.*) It appears that the number of school hours in Boston for the week is about twenty-two in both primary and grammar school. This is, in fact, about the usual length of a school week in the American cities. The English code fixes twenty hours as the school week. Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a report of education upon the Continent recently published, points out that in Germany the hours are much longer. In Hamburg, for example, the lowest classes have twenty-six hours and the highest classes thirty-two in the week. This should be borne in mind if any comparison is to be made between the results of instruction in America or England and the most advanced countries of the Continent.

It may be worth mentioning that it has been long the custom everywhere to interrupt the work of the school session, both forenoon and afternoon, by a recess varying from ten to twenty minutes. In several of the large cities, however, there has been substituted for this custom a shortening of the sessions. Under this latter system the arrangement of hours is as follows: In the primary and grammar grades the morning session begins at 9 o'clock and closes at 11.30, and the afternoon session begins at 1.30 and closes at 3.30.

A fair average number of scholars to a teacher in the primary and grammar schools is somewhere between fifty and sixty. This, however, is a matter left to each School Board to settle for itself, and economy is frequently an important consideration in deciding. In New York the following regulations hold:—

(1.) No class in the grammar school shall contain more than sixty pupils.

(2.) No class in the primary school shall contain more than seventy-five pupils.

In Chicago the average of pupils to each teacher is 54, in San Francisco 41, in Kansas City 54, in Cleveland 43.

The programme of work in the American high schools appears pretty well to correspond with those of the classical and modern sides of English public schools. The same complaints are raised that in the classical schools too much attention is given to composition and the niceties of scholarships, instead of making correct translation the main feature; while in the non-classical

high schools it is alleged that much time and energy is consumed in fruitless attempts to teach the speaking and writing of the French and German languages.

It is a noticeable fact that there are more girls than boys who avail themselves of secondary education. There is an excess of girls over boys in those who enter the course, and a still greater excess of girls over boys in those who graduate—that is, complete the course. This is largely to be attributed to the cause which militates more than any other against the development of mental culture in the male American, the eagerness to be making money and the necessity of insuring success by entering business at an early age.

It may be interesting to conclude an account of high schools by quoting the various modes of admission which are most in vogue. (1) Competitive examinations, the number to be admitted being previously fixed; (2) a pass examination, the candidates being obliged to reach a certain percentage; (3) the graduating diploma of the grammar school is accepted as evidence of qualifications; (4) recommendation by the principal of the high school; (5) by quotas sent up by wards or districts.

The evening school is intended for the use of those who have passed the limit to which elementary education is confined, the age of fourteen years, and more especially for adults of both sexes. They are thus not intended as substitutes, but as complements to the day schools. The following account of their aim may be quoted:—

"The lowest and simplest function of the evening school is to afford to illiterate adults and youths who have passed beyond the elementary school age the means of acquiring the rudiments of knowledge, such as reading, writing, and the simplest rules of arithmetic; but in our cities there is a happily rapidly increasing number of youths and adults who desire to devote their evenings to the acquisition of knowledge, either industrial, as a means of promoting their success in their respective callings, or general, as a means of mental culture and intellectual development. Hence the demand for evening high schools with both liberal and industrial courses of study, and evening drawing schools of different grades."

Thus there are two classes of evening schools—one to serve as a continuation of elementary education, the other as a continuation of high-school education. We will give a brief separate treatment of these two classes. It should, however, be premised that few cities contain anything like a completely organized system of evening schools; in many cities there are no evening schools of any kind, in the class ranking next higher in the scale of progress evening schools depend on voluntary efforts, in the next stage of development we find elementary public schools, in a small class we find added the evening high school, and, last of all, the evening drawing school has begun to be adopted as part of the system.

The demand for evening high schools does not arise, as in the case of elementary schools, from the failure of the day school to achieve its object; but, on the other hand, the better the advantages of instruction in the day schools, the more completely they succeed in giving to all the children a thorough course of elementary education, the greater is the demand for and the use of the evening high school. Cincinnati was probably the first city to incorporate this institution into her system of schools, and her example has been followed by many of the large cities. In St. Louis the evening high school is a kind of preparatory department of the Polytechnic School of Washington University. The New York school was started in 1866, and is conducted on a most liberal scale.

"The branches taught, as reported in 1883, are the following: Latin, history, political science, reading and declamation, English grammar and composition, German, French, Spanish, architectural mechanical and freehand drawing, penmanship, photography, mathematics, arithmetic, bookkeeping, chemistry, anatomy, and physiology. The number of applicants for admission was about 3,000, of whom 1,655 were found qualified for admission; average attendance, 951; number of instructors, 22. The average age of students was over twenty years."

The evening high school at Boston numbers about 1,600 pupils. Brooklyn has just taken the step of establishing a second school of this kind. The class of persons who benefit most from these schools are a peculiarly deserving one—the class of industrious men and women who are occupied by business in the day-time, and who choose to devote their spare evening-time to study. The movement is at present confined to large cities, but there are signs which predict a rapid spread among the smaller cities.

In giving here a short review of what has been done in the direction of industrial education in the States, it may be well to premise by defining the term, which is somewhat loosely used. By industrial education is meant such technical education as aims at imparting the knowledge and skill requisite for success in the departments of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. The introduction of multifarious machinery, and the attendant growth of production upon a large scale, the consequent decay of the practice of apprenticeship, presses upon society the necessity of providing some means of preparing the youth for the work they are afterwards to undertake beyond supplying them with the common elements of general education. The recognition of this necessity has led in various countries, especially in Austria, Germany, and France, and to a less extent in England, to the establishment of industrial schools. As yet no great progress has been made in this direction in the States, but the subject is attracting increased interest every day, and such experiments as have been made justify great expectation for the future.

Industrial education has taken two forms. The first consists in the attachment of the workshop to the ordinary school, elementary or high, as a special department. The second consists in the establishment of separate technical schools for apprentices, consisting of the requisite shops, with means of imparting theoretical instruction applicable to the trade taught.

Trial has been made of the first form of industrial education in one or two of the smaller cities, and also on a small scale at Boston. In each of these cases instruction in carpentering has been attached to the ordinary school curriculum as an optional subject. However, although the question has been mooted for more than fifteen years, few cities have shown any inclination to adopt this method of imparting technical education. In fact, the weight of pedagogical opinion is against the annexing of the shop to the elementary school, on the ground that industrial education should be postponed till after the first stage of public education.

Far more promise attaches to the second form of industrial education, which consists in the

establishment of separate manual training schools for children who have completed their general elementary course. The first establishment of this kind was the manual training school in connection with the Washington University at St. Louis. The following is a sketch of the plan:—

"It is essentially a non-classical high school, with fully-equipped shops annexed for work in wood and iron, Candidates for admission must be fourteen years old, and pass an examination about equivalent to the requirements of the second class (next to the highest) in a grammar school. The course of instruction covers three years. The daily session begins at 9 a.m. and closes at 3.20 p.m. Each pupil has three recitations a day—one hour of drawing and two hours of shop practice. Hand work is divided into four departments—namely, carpentry, wood-turning, forging, and machine-shop work. It is claimed that, without teaching any one trade, the essential mechanical principles of all are taught."

A system of public education which provides instruction for more than 11,000,000 children requires, of course, a very large teaching staff. It is proposed here to give some account of the provision made by the States for the training of teachers, and to examine the position which teaching holds as a profession in the country. The number of public-school teachers in the United States, city and rural, reached, according to the latest report, the total of 293,294. To meet this demand, all the States, with the exception of six, have established State normal schools, or training colleges, as we should call them, and a number of the larger cities have followed the example. There are in all ninety-eight State normal colleges and twenty-one city normal colleges, having an attendance of about 25,000 students.

The following account of the Washington school is interesting:—

"The normal school takes a limited number of graduates from the high school, and gives them a one-year's course of professional training, the study of the theory and the practice of the art of teaching. The candidates admitted are selected by competitive examination, which secures to the school a high standard of academic scholarship as a starting-point for each class. The normal school has practice schools of the first and second grade, under the exclusive control of the principal of the school. The teachers of the practice schools rank as assistants in the normal school. Schools of the higher grades are also made use of for observation and practice. The fundamental principles of education can be studied best in connection with their application in teaching young children. Hence the greater part of the practice is in the lower-grade schools especially assigned for this purpose."

The rate of salary offered is much larger than that for which the life work of able teachers in Germany is obtained. For instance, we find that the average remuneration of male teachers in the public school is, in the State of California, at the rate of £192 per annum, in Massachusetts £240 per annum; the rate for female teachers is in most States considerably lower, but in California it averages £156 per annum, in Massachusetts it sinks to £84. The average rate throughout the States seems to be for males about £144, for females £110. When we compare these figures with the salaries in the French primary schools, where the masters' salaries vary from £36 in the lowest class to £48 in the highest, or with the Prussian schools, where the average salary is ascertained to be £51 12s. per annum, we shall perceive what an expensive system that of the United States is.

One of the most curious features of the public-school system is the large preponderance of female teachers. So large is this preponderance that it would not be far from the truth to say that the cities where male teachers are employed in elementary schools in any other capacity than that of principals or as teachers of special subjects may be reckoned as the exceptions. In the mixed high schools the numbers of male and female teachers are about the same. Where the high schools are unmixed, those for boys are taught by male teachers, those for girls by women under a male principal. Selecting a few of the largest cities, we find that in New York the number of male teachers is 452, the number of female teachers 2,899, the ratio being 1 to 6·4; in Boston 122 males as against 996 females, the ratio being 1 to 8·2. In Philadelphia and Chicago the preponderance of females is much greater, the ratios being 1 to 25·4 and 1 to 23·6 respectively.

If we take twenty-four of the largest towns we find that the average proportion of male teachers to female is about 1 to 10. In Chicago there are, in fact, in the elementary schools no male teachers, properly so-called; for the men reckoned as teachers are in fact superintendents, each with a large number of classes and teaches under his direction. Nor is this custom confined to city schools—the rural schools also are largely taught by females; thus, in 1882 there were in Massachusetts 1,079 male teachers as against 7,858 females, in New York State 7,123 male as against 24,110 female. This condition, however, does not hold in all the States: in most of the central States, such as Kentucky and Tennessee, there is a considerable preponderance of male teachers, as also is the case in certain of the southern States. On the whole, taking the numbers in all the States, the number of female teachers is nearly double that of male teachers. It may be supposed that considerations of cheapness have chiefly prompted the employment of females in preference to males, but there seems also to have existed a strong impression in favour of their greater efficiency, and even now the question seems an open one.

"Some years back it was quite common for State Superintendents of schools, in their reports, to mention as a matter of congratulation and as evidence of progress the increasing proportion of the female teachers; but there seems to have been a turn in the tide. The question is coming to be discussed in more than one place, whether the displacement of male teachers has not been carried too far for the best interests of our schools."

This question is in no small measure identified with the question of the greater permanency of school offices. With women, as a rule, teaching can only be a temporary occupation and not a life work; and thus, if for no other reason, the best teachers will generally be men.

[*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, nil; printing (1,425 copies), £47 10s.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1887.