

inconsistent with the American ideal of "social efficiency," often in practice becomes merged in that of national predominance or imperialism; indeed, in Germany it may be said that in the popular mind the ideal of national efficiency is more or less confused by the fact that so much of the education system is directed towards the army as its immediate goal.

But, even if we succeed in striking roughly an average estimate of the national ideals of education, we may be led astray if we do not allow sufficient weight to the local influences that modify such ideals both in spirit and in practice. Enlightened communities like Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow, or even London, in Great Britain; Geneva and Zürich Cantons, in Switzerland; Stuttgart, Munich, Frankfurt, Berlin, &c., in Germany; New York and Chicago, in the United States, may be in their educational policy in advance of the average standard reached by the nation. This is especially the case in countries like those mentioned, where schools are largely supported out of local taxation, and where accordingly the local control is not only substantial, but is more or less closely associated with the municipal authorities—so that the school and the school committee are not things apart, but form an organic feature in the civic life of the community. As teaching should be real, having direct relation to the practical needs of life, so should the control of educational affairs be not merely the function of special officials, but the business of every citizen, and thus, so to speak, in vital contact with the heart of the nation. Whether the theory enunciated be approved or not, it is, in my judgment, almost indisputable that it is in such a country as Switzerland, where the conditions I have described are most fully observed, that we find the most complete national system of education—high in standard, thoroughly efficient, and natural and smooth in operation.

It is for this reason among others that I have selected the Swiss system for a somewhat more detailed description than others which are in many respects no doubt almost equally good, but which did not fall so fully within my personal observation.

Generally speaking, in those districts of Great Britain which have the best organized systems of education the conditions of life are so different from our own that it would be undesirable, if not impossible, to transplant into New Zealand any of the chief features belonging to those systems, unless it be the method of control and administration introduced into England and Wales by the Education Act of 1902, when the special School Boards elected *ad hoc* were replaced by Education Committees of the city or borough councils, or of the county councils. These committees consist half of members of the councils, and half of outside members. They may have control of all local education—primary, secondary, and technical; they have, subject to certain limitations, the power of rating for educational purposes, which is exercised through the councils with which they are associated. The unification of all local education is certainly an end to be desired in New Zealand, and if there were in New Zealand local bodies with such general powers as those possessed by the county councils in England, there would probably be little objection to making the Boards of Education education committees of such local bodies, with limited rating-powers, and control of all education. The plan has worked admirably in England. The London County Council has continued and improved upon the policy of the London School Board, and is now endeavouring to supply the gaps in the secondary education of the Metropolis.

The systems of Wales and of the cities of Birmingham and Glasgow particularly attracted my attention; no money has been spared to make them as good as possible—and the money has practically been voted by the people themselves. Still, even there the ladder of education, from the kindergarten to the university, is by no means so complete as it is in the United States, or Switzerland, or New Zealand. Probably the chief lesson to be learnt from the Mother-country is the great emphasis that is laid in the great public (secondary) schools on the training of character. The undoubted failure of most of these schools to reach the average boy intellectually, of which Mr. A. C. Benson has written so much lately, does not detract materially from the force of the remark, especially as a reform of educational curriculum and methods would assist rather than impede the efforts made to form strong, fearless, capable, and honest men.

The other lessons we have to learn relate mainly to details of the methods used in the best schools, which often reach a standard of excellence and thoroughness not surpassed elsewhere in the world. For this reason, except where they are needed for purposes of comparison, any remarks I have to make on the schools of Great Britain will find their appropriate place in the Appendix to this report.