

entirely for that of the written papers. This, as I understand the position, is the ultimate aim of the Department."

Such a scheme as that outlined above, worked in conjunction with a Schools Board and a greatly enlarged system of inspection of secondary schools, would be a great step forward for New Zealand, and also a step along the road towards "accrediting" or the recognition of school certificates as a qualification for entrance to the university. The aim should be educational freedom exercised by scholarly and capable teachers working in co-operation with a highly trained and sympathetic body of inspectors. But it should be pointed out that men and women need training for the responsibilities of freedom. The evil effect of the imposed syllabus and the external examination is to be found in the inevitable debasing of the ideals of the rank and file of the teaching staff, and in the formation of false notions of the purpose of education in the minds of parents and school governors. A school system cannot pass from the tyranny of an external-examination system to one of certification by the school authorities without much preliminary preparation. For an accrediting system the quality of the members of the staff must be of a high order. The courses of study must be skilfully drawn and as skilfully supervised, and there must be an insistence upon the successful completion of the course as a whole, thus involving attendance at a school for a definite number of years.

These demands involve the establishment of an effective system of training secondary-school teachers, and the prohibition of the employment of teachers who are unqualified either in respect of scholarship or professional training. They further involve close and continuous inquiry by expert bodies into school curricula, and into methods of testing the results of education, so that teachers may be kept advised of the best opinion. And they involve such a change in the attitude of the public towards secondary education, as will recognize that the schools will not tolerate the present practice of allowing pupils to attempt in two years work which should rightly take three or four, and to take a "shot" at an examination for which they are inadequately prepared.

In our judgment, a system of accrediting is the ideal to be aimed at in secondary education, but it should not be rashly adopted. Ill-informed opinion often asserts that systems of accrediting are discredited in America, whereas the facts are that excellent results have been secured wherever the system has been adequately safeguarded and supervised, and where the schools and School Committees have been properly prepared for the responsibilities imposed upon them. The adverse opinion referred to is based upon accounts of years ago, when accrediting was introduced without the safeguards and previous preparation above recommended. A system of accrediting has been very cautiously and conservatively introduced in Victoria by the University of Melbourne. It is administered by a representative Schools Board appointed under regulations of the University. One of our witnesses, Professor R. Lawson, Professor of Education in the University of Otago, stated, "The Schools Board system makes for improved standards because it gives leading teachers an official opportunity of discussion and recommendation with other teachers, professors, lecturers, and headmasters as well as departmental representatives. The system of Standing Committees (two of which I served on) makes in the same direction—better books, better methods, better standards. I may say it was not uncommon for a pupil who failed to be accredited in his school to pass the corresponding university examination a few weeks later. The higher standard of work demanded of pupils results largely from the higher nature of secondary inspection conducted under the Board. I was closely connected with secondary education in Victoria from 1899–1923 and saw the improvement noted above, arising out of compulsory training of teachers. I am of opinion that a well-thought-out system of accrediting does not lower school standards—it raises them. Besides, it gives freedom of syllabus (within reasonable limit) to the schools accepting it."

But it should be pointed out that the number of schools accredited in Victoria after years of the system is still small, and that the conditions to be complied with are many and difficult. Victoria has a developed system of training secondary teachers, it has legislation which prohibits the employment of unqualified teachers in secondary schools, and it has a fairly complete staff of secondary-school inspectors. Nevertheless, the best opinion is in favour of developing the system slowly and of including only those schools which can satisfy severe tests.

Intermediate and leaving certificates a step towards "accrediting" system.

System of training secondary teachers necessary.

Accrediting demands adequate safeguards.