

REPORT UPON STATE EDUCATION¹

IN

GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, ITALY, GERMANY,
BELGIUM, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; INCLUD-
ING A SPECIAL REPORT UPON DEAF-MUTE INSTRUCTION.

To the Hon. the PREMIER of New Zealand.

Auckland, November, 1886.

"What you would have in the nation, that you must put in the schools."

Int. Ed. Conf., 1884, vol. xiv., p. 405.

INTRODUCTION.

SIR,—

In compliance with the request contained in the letters to me, dated the 1st October, 1883, from the Hons. the then Premier of the colony, and the then Minister of Education, I now submit the results of my investigations respecting State education in Europe and America.²

The countries written of are Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and The United States; as it was to those countries, as special centres of educational life and progress,³ that I directed my attention. Countries treated of.

It is conceived that the aim of national education is in each country the same; although the methods adopted may, necessarily, differ, as being, more or less, dependent on climatic, religious, financial, political, or, indeed, geographical⁴ conditions.

In studying, therefore, the subject, I have endeavoured to keep in view that three ques- Questions involved.
tions should be the tests of any existing system, or proposed innovation, viz.:—

- (1.) What is the true aim of national education?⁵
- (2.) In what respects, if any, do the means employed in any other country differ⁶ from those in the Colony? and
- (3.) Whether there are such conditions as account for, or justify, any difference?

It has been also borne in mind that it does not necessarily follow because a particular *régime*, or feature, is the best suited for one place that it is so for another.⁷ Thus, where a people is all, or virtually all, of the same creed, it is presumed that no serious difference on the religious aspect of national education can arise.

Similarly, financial discussion could not, it is conceived, become important where no State assistance is needed; so that it is impossible to indiscriminately cull all the excellences

¹ "Education—that unconsidered word."—"Oceana," by J. A. Froude, p. 291. Longmans, 1886.

² "Comparison through historical criticism is the method of educational progress."—John D. Philbrick, L.L.D., late Superintendent of Boston Schools, in Circulars of Information for the Bureau of Education No. 1, 1885, "City School Systems in the United States" (hereafter termed "Dr. Philbrick"). Washington Government Printing Office, 1885.

³ "However, progress has different definitions in different countries."—Marquis of Salisbury's speech on Home Rule, 15 May, 1886. "The science of government is an experimental science; and therefore it is, like all other experimental sciences, a progressive science."—Lord Macaulay, *Essays, &c.*, 1885, p. 260.

⁴ As in Switzerland.

⁵ "The education of the people conducted on those principles of morality which are common to all the

forms of Christianity, is highly valuable as a means of promoting the main object for which Government exists," &c.—Lord Macaulay, *Essays, &c.*, p. 493.

For recent remarks on Objects of Education see (a) Mr. M. Arnold's evidence before Royal Education Commission (1886); (b) "Journal of Ed.," July, 1886, p. 273; (c) Manitoba report for year ending 31 Jan., 1886, p. 56; and (d) "Education and Politics," *Sat. Rev.*, 3 April, 1886, p. 465.

⁶ See Art. by J. H. Raven, "*Macm. Mag.*," April, 1886, p. 437, thus: "In these latter days, when the civilized world seems to be completely agreed upon the value of education, and as completely divided upon educational methods," &c.

⁷ "For what was good elsewhere might not be good when transferred to new soil."—The Right Hon. A. J. Mundella, quoted in Art. on "Free Schools," by Lord Norton, in "*Nineteenth Century Review*" (hereafter termed N.C.), Nov., 1885, p. 806.