

no one could accuse the Board of great foresight in the matter, although it was obvious it was a rising and prosperous district with a tram service, and therefore that the attendance at the school was likely to increase. We started with a headmaster and a female assistant. The headmaster had Standards I, II, and III in one room, and Standards IV, V, and VI in another, and the female assistant took the primers and preparatory classes—comprising about eighty children—in another room; so that the headmaster had to divide his time between two rooms and six standards, and the assistant had to teach between seventy and eighty children, and at one time ninety. The Commission can draw their own conclusions as to the efficiency of the education. There are nine members on the Hawke's Bay Education Board—three for the Northern Ward, three for the Middle, and three for the Southern. As far as Gisborne is concerned, it is an isolated place, really in the Auckland Province, and the Auckland Board has a reserve there. Nevertheless, we are attached to the Hawke's Bay District, and send three members from the Gisborne end. The members from outside Gisborne would know nothing whatever as to the requirements of the Gisborne district. There is much wanting in the administration, and dissatisfaction is felt throughout our district. As an instance of their administration, right at the outset the Board sent us a nice flag to fly on special occasions. We suggested that they should subsidize us if we built a flag-pole to fly it upon, but we only got in reply a polite negative; probably they regarded a flagstaff as a luxury. Gymnasium and gymnastic apparatus, really a part of the requisites for physical culture at the school, were required, but these also were refused to us. We wanted the school grounds asphalted. It was sandy soil, and when there were strong winds there was a considerable erosion of sand, which blew through the windows; but we were told if we wanted asphalt we should have to dip our hands into our pockets, and then the Board might subsidize our expenditure £1 for £1. We have raised £30 or £40 during twelve months for the purpose of completing the building and making it a decent school, but here again we have had no encouragement from the Board. We consider that, with regard to new school buildings, there should be standard designs issued by the Department, and the matter should not be left to the discretion of the Board's architects. In one of our rooms the blackboards are at one end and the children are placed facing the light. The blackboard itself was of dark-green linoleum, which rapidly became of a grey colour. For my part, I should not like to have to read matter chalked on that board from some distance, as the children have had to do. The chimneys in the school would not draw, so that the windows had to be kept wide open, otherwise the room was filled with smoke; and on some occasions the rain has come in and flooded the school. The general design was not at all satisfactory. We wrote to the Board several times with regard to these defects, but the matter was not attended to. The foreman of works, I think, came out and reported, and then I believe the Inspector came along, and he also went back to Napier and reported. Then they got a price from a local man, which, I think, was considered excessive. The northern members were instructed to inquire into the matter when they came to Gisborne, and one of them came along and reported. The surroundings generally of the school did not lend themselves to efficient teaching. Then we have had other trouble with the Board. At the outset we suggested that the school should be equipped with single desks seeing that it was a new school, but the Board informed us that they were equipping it with the usual fittings, and they sent along the usual uncomfortable desks for the infants, and refused our application for dual or single desks. About six months after the opening of the school we had trouble with vermin, a thing which might have been obviated if our request for single desks had been acceded to. The school is not satisfactorily equipped so far as the infant department is concerned. There is nothing in the way of kindergarten materials, and for the upper classes there is very little in the way of scientific apparatus. We have also had trouble with the Board on the question of the appointment of teachers. One of our teachers, the senior female assistant, went away for twelve months. We recommended that the junior teacher be appointed to her position. But the request was ignored, and another lady was sent along to take the place of the absent teacher. She had had no previous experience in infant teaching, and yet she took charge of the infant department. We were not consulted in any way with regard to the appointment of the teacher, and yet, according to the Act, we understand that temporary appointments are only to be made for three months; for anything further than that there should be a consultation with the Committee. We are also badly troubled owing to lack of funds. We have been working on an overdraft for as long as the bank would allow it. The capitation is ridiculously insufficient. When you have paid the caretaker's salary and the coal bill there is very little left, and it is difficult to get the Board to grant us more than our bare allowance. It is even difficult to get a pound-for-pound subsidy upon the amounts we raise by entertainments. Personally, I think the Boards might very well be wiped out without any loss to the education system. I do not see that they serve any useful function that could not be performed by the Central Department or the local Committee. As to whether we get the value for the money expended by the State on education, I should certainly say we are a long way from getting it. Comparing education here with education in the Old Country as I knew it from ten to twenty years ago, I should say that the education here now in the primary schools is about equal to the country-school education in England as I remember it twenty or twenty-five years ago. The children are taught in a parrot-like fashion *en masse*, and they get very little in the way of kindergarten instruction. Knowledge is just hammered into them at express speed from an overloaded syllabus. They get a mere smattering of everything and a good knowledge of nothing. Again, with regard to the system of education—I am speaking now about wiping out the Board—if you take the average city or suburban School Committee in Auckland, and compare the members with the Board members, anybody will admit that you will get a better body of men on a Committee like that of Devonport and Ponsonby than you will get on the Auckland Education Board; and therefore why the Committee's functions should be limited just to seeing that the sanitary arrangements are properly carried out, and to meeting once a month and spending 2s. 3d.