

of the teacher's work. All these reforms have been welcomed by teachers, each as a step forward towards our goal—a noble profession evolved from a sorry trade. (4.) The introduction of a modern syllabus which brings us into close touch with the child's life and aims at making the fullest use of his environment in leading out his inborn capabilities. And, consequently, (5) the getting-away from a narrow system of training which aimed, even in elementary schools, at concentration on a few faculties at the cost of others very important. The commercial success of England left its mark on the elementary schools, and it will be long before we can free our minds from the prejudice towards a commercial bias in education. In the last century the ideal held up to boyhood was the successful merchant, who as a poor boy had gone up to London, entered a counting-house, and by ability and industry raised himself to fame. The primary education which would give the introduction to this life was in great demand. The same ideas governed our first schools in New Zealand—a land requiring a rural rather than an urban population; and to the lads who might well have gone afield the bells again rang out, "Turn again, Whittington!" Are we not realizing at last that such a bias is quite unfitted to the national schools of this pastoral and industrial country—that our education has, in too many cases, unfitted the child to follow the occupation of his father? I firmly believe that the present trend in education is wise, and is based on a fuller revelation of child-nature that has resulted from the application of scientific method in its research. Notwithstanding this opinion of a general improvement, I think that your Commission will have an excellent opportunity to suggest further improvements. It goes almost without saying that the most crying need at the present time is that of the children of our backblocks. Particularly is that the case in many parts of this province. The difficulties are—(1) The impossibility of regular attendance owing to the state of the roads; (2) the difficulty of getting efficient teachers to serve in remote parts; (3) the frequent changes in teachers in such schools due to unwillingness to serve in them long. These are very real difficulties, and it is obvious that to remove this most serious disability suffered by many country children much help must be given from outside. The most practical suggestions I can offer are, therefore—(1) To recommend the Government to improve the roads leading to these schools; (2) to pay a higher remuneration for the teachers' services in them; (3) to give extra service marks to those who loyally serve in remote schools. The question of the higher payment of these teachers raises the whole question of teachers' salaries. I wish to record my belief—(1) That the emoluments offered to teachers and Inspectors are not likely to draw into the profession the type of man most needed for it, since the prospects of reward are much more generous in other professions requiring no more ability or preparation; (2) that the present salaries earned by the majority of teachers after long service (apart from the few more fortunate ones who hold the higher positions) are insufficient to maintain them in sufficient comfort and dignity; (3) that the increase in the cost of living during recent years has pressed very severely indeed on the families of teachers with moderate salaries; (4) that the Inspectors' salaries should be governed by a Dominion scale, and should in all cases be more than those of teachers under their direction. In the case of district high schools, the comparative lowness of salary has led to an exceedingly short tenure of position on the part of these teachers. The inference is obvious. Another direction in which improvement is desirable is the removal of the disability in regard to promotion suffered by teachers in small educational districts. There are so few good positions within their own districts, and the difficulty of obtaining good appointments elsewhere is so real, that discontent is engendered, and men try to serve in larger districts. Not for the teacher alone, but for the general advancement of education in these districts, some remedy is required. For this reason teachers would like to see a rearrangement of education districts. Then grading schemes like that in force in Auckland would be practicable throughout the Dominion. As far as it goes, this scheme gives great satisfaction, and has done much to uplift the dignity of the teacher. In one way it is incomplete. In my opinion it should grade its teacher irrespective of sex for every type of position. I doubt if the Board realizes how keenly its women teachers are feeling the injustice of being debarred from fair competition. The male teachers do not fear open competition, and, I believe, would generously welcome the appointment of a woman to a high position if merit alone were its cause. As the efficiency of the service demands that the best teachers should hold the most influential positions, I consider this position impregnable. With such a scheme so amended introduced into each reconstructed district of suitable size, the button-hole system of appointment—undignified and little less than scandalous—would be wiped out. The Boards which have voluntarily renounced the patronage to which they might have clung have earned the sincere gratitude of their teachers. Another improvement which I hope to see in the not very distant future is an introduction of the kindergarten as an integral part of our State-school system. As a result of my experience with the kindergarten in my own school, I cannot speak too highly of its good work and great possibilities, and hope that the Government will aim at a gradual introduction of this most practical and beneficial system of character-building. In regard to the Training College, I wish to urge two things—(1.) The provision for such salaries to all positions in the Normal School as will entice the most efficient candidates for the positions of critic teachers to apply. The two lowest positions are those chiefly referred to, where the teachers begin at a minimum salary of £90 per annum. These teachers have responsibilities which bear heavily upon them. Not only must they act as models and critics for students, but they are constantly under inspection from visitors from other schools. Try to realize the position, and the anomaly will force itself upon you. (2.) The extension of facilities for the practical work of the students. One hundred students practising on five hundred pupils is altogether too heavy a load for a normal school. In practical work we did by far the best work when we had only half the present number of students. The burden on my teachers is very great, and there is some loss of efficiency in the training given, to say nothing of the effect upon the children. I think it would pay the State to incorporate another primary school with the college so that the training might be as practical as possible, and thoroughly