

Teachers will aim to please the Inspector—their own impulses retire to the background—matter and methods must be adopted to gain the Inspector's approval. After his visit they feel their wings cut, their self-respect has received a shock, the joy of their work has gone for a long time. Books they are using, though used by the first authorities, must be replaced; such-and-such subjects must receive unnecessary attention, because it is the pet subject of the Inspector then representing the local Education Board. Failure to do this would bring down adverse criticism; thus originality is crushed, and the moulding to one pattern begins of teacher and taught. As an illustration, take a very successful humorous-minded teacher at home with his pupils, who enjoy all their lessons to the full, and learn like racehorses because of the pleasantries with which their lessons are imparted. Could such a teacher be natural before an Inspector? Would he not in curtailing his humour be shorn of his originality, and be rendered awkward, as a workman with untried tools? Such power would be conferred by these examinations on local Boards that private schools of even long and tried experience may be easily ruined by them, by withholding from its pupils certificates of exemption at its sweet will. The hyper-value of examinations is, we know, now much questioned by educationists, physicians, metaphysicians, who know their evils, and the literary and business world have proved their inefficiency, so it seems now out of date to inaugurate a system which shall double the examinations of private schools. For every first-class private school pledges itself to the parents of its pupils to test the success of its work by termly examinations, the results of which—and in some cases the actual papers, the unaided work of the pupil—are submitted to the parents for their investigation. These examinations are necessary to the principal and teacher to enable them to ascertain the success of their work. Then, further examinations by the local Board of Education must prove an overlapping redundancy of examinations, and involve waste of time in several places, and a waste of nerve-strain on the part of teachers and pupils. Will not the Commission of 1912 initiate a better course than this harassing, obnoxious, fettering, stultifying, stereotyping, redundant, and tyrannical scheme of examinations of certified private schools by local Boards of Education? Thus will they ensure to the Government the pecuniary saving accomplished by private enterprise—viz., £60 per annum for each pupil of private schools—and to the certified principals and pupils of such schools the consideration and liberty they ask by removing from the Act the clause which gives local Education Boards undue power over private schools.

AUCKLAND, SATURDAY, 8TH JUNE, 1912.

BLANCHE BUTLER examined on oath. (No. 16.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are your educational qualifications?—I am a Bachelor of Science of the University of London. I have had five years' teaching experience in England. I was Science Mistress at the Burton-on-Trent School and at the Brighton and Hove High School for Girls. I have been Vice-Principal of the Liverpool College for Girls, Grove Street, Liverpool, and I am at present Principal of the Auckland Girls' Grammar School.

2. Will you kindly state the points that you wish to bring before the Commission?—In considering the question of primary and secondary education, I would draw your attention to the urgent need for correlation between the primary and secondary systems. Much time is spent in secondary schools in going over the ground covered in the primary schools, in order to teach the children uniformity of method and style. This want of correlation is particularly felt in the teaching of arithmetic and English. In the latter subject I feel that there is a strange lack of development in the originality of the child. Girls with good memories can reproduce highflown and, for them, unnatural phraseology; but neither they nor their more forgetful sisters have any command of their own language, or any idea of arranging and expressing their thoughts. I would also urge a wider field of knowledge in English, history, and geography. There are many delightful books written nowadays which present history in an interesting and fascinating aspect to children, and much can be done by the teacher who can tell a story well and graphically, aided by maps, pictures, and other illustrations. I would urge that primary and secondary teachers should meet annually to discuss methods and text-books, so that no time is wasted in the child's school-life, and so that there should be no undoing, or going over the same ground twice. In the teaching of English it seems to me that reading and voice-production must play an important part at first. It is a great gift to be able to hear oneself, and it seems to me that silent reading can only be cultivated by much reading aloud at first. Rapid silent reading is an easily acquired art, when one has trained the mind not only to absorb by vision, but to impress and vitalize the words by attaching to them sounds. My own experience with even advanced girls (ages sixteen to nineteen) has been that where the subject-matter is dry and difficult the beauty of the language has been useless, owing to the lack of power on the part of the reader to hear and appreciate this beauty as she reads to herself. If the same passage be read aloud to her by a good reader her interest is keen, and her grasp of the subject-matter good; but she is incapable of attacking such reading-matter keenly and interestedly alone, owing, in my opinion, to her lack of the above faculty. This is especially the case with the heavier prose works and poetry. I would suggest also that much may be done to encourage reading by introducing extracts from well-known authors to supply local colour in all subjects, and by selecting markedly rhythmical and musical prose or poetry for reading aloud. Composition is weak in nearly all cases, and I feel sure that wide reading alone can remedy the weak diction and lack of originality. The teaching of English grammar is a difficult subject, and I often think that if we aimed at teaching children very little