

In submitting this report, your Commissioners regret that the time at their disposal was not more than sufficient to allow of a hurried visit to the principal centres in each Island and the taking of evidence easily available. A large amount of valuable criticism of the methods and quality of the instruction in our State schools was given by leading educationists and other representative people, enabling the Commission to arrive at the conclusions given in this report. The limit, however, to the number of districts to be visited and the impossibility of obtaining the printed evidence before the presentation of this report will readily explain any apparent oversight in dealing with some questions of importance.

The recommendations of your Commission embody proposals for the revision of the whole system of primary, technical, and secondary education on lines which should give continuity of government from the Minister to the School Committees, retaining the maximum of local interest, while ensuring complete responsibility in every grade of activity. The institution of a Council of Education, five Education Boards, School Boards in the large centres, and School Committees for the scattered districts should be an ideal method of dealing with what we consider is the most important branch of local government in the Dominion, while the proposals for encouraging local contributions to the cost of education, and the protection of the system in the more remote localities, should ensure the establishment of the greatest facilities for carrying on our education system without trenching too largely upon the public purse.

The outstanding weaknesses of the present education system may be enumerated as—

- The complexity of the departmental administration ;
- The difficulty of securing satisfactory management in small education districts ;
- The want of uniformity, aim, and method amongst Inspectors ;
- The unsatisfactory methods adopted by most Boards for the appointment and promotion of teachers ;
- The indefinite and complicated nature of the syllabus ;
- The unsuitability of school buildings and equipment in many instances ;
- The inadequate playgrounds ;
- The lack of co-ordination between primary and higher branches of education ;
- The want of facilities for rural training ; and
- The absence of a degree of direct responsibility of the Boards in the expenditure of the moneys entrusted to them.

The commendable features are,—

- The devotion to duty shown by the officials ;
- The services rendered without pay or reward by the large number of members of the different governing bodies ;
- The zeal and high standing of the Inspectors and teachers ;
- The considerable measure of success attained in the application of modern methods of education to the problems of everyday life ; and
- The readiness of the pupils to take advantage of the system as shown by the high percentage of attendance maintained, particularly in those portions of the Dominion where climatic and other conditions are unfavourable.

Your Commissioners recommend the appointment of a Council of Education, to consist of fifteen members, and to be called “The Council of National Education,” for the Dominion of New Zealand.

The following members of the Council to be appointed by the Governor in Council :—

- The Minister of Education, who shall be Chairman ;
- The Director of Education ;
- The Supervisor of Technical Education ; and
- Two representatives of the producing industries of the Dominion :

together with ten other members, who shall be elected as under :—

- One by the inspectoral staffs of the several Education Boards of the Dominion ;