

upon a faith in the nature or character of humanity, when living under conditions of free opportunity for union, to develop its powers. . . . It depends upon the human heart to find the solution of any social situation as much as upon the intellect, and much more than upon any set formula of government. . . . It rests upon a regard for natural law and a belief that sufficient knowledge of the laws of cosmic forces and of human powers can and must be attained to guide the heart of mankind to the greatest civilization."

We may realize how far we have still to go if we believe that education will never be made truly effective until every child in the community has had the best possible opportunity to develop all his latent or growing powers to the fullest extent, and until we remove as far as possible any economic or other disability that may prevent a child from attaining his fullest manhood. It is the duty of the State to see that brain-capacity, wherever found, shall be fully developed. No ability should waste for lack of opportunity. The child of a labourer should receive the necessary assistance and encouragement to become a statesman or an artist if he shows that he has the capacities for such a career. Further, there is a distinct need for a broad educational highway that will carry the whole mass of the people forward, even though it be but a comparatively short distance. True national efficiency will never be reached until this standard is not only recognized, but is made actual. Organization, administration, institutions, industrial agencies, machinery, railways, and the like are all necessary for the progress of a modern community, but none of these, nor all of them together, can compare in importance with the value of the human agent through whom all institutions and administrative, mechanical, and material appliances can be made effective.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY.

New Zealand has cause to be proud of the fact that an unusually large proportion of its children are able to continue their education beyond the primary-school stage, and that nearly 90 per cent. of these receive their secondary education free, while a considerable number again are provided with free education at the University. Our gratification at such a result in a comparatively young community should not obscure the fact that nearly half of the pupils of primary schools reach the age of fourteen and terminate their education without passing the Sixth Standard, while a large number do not even pass the Fifth Standard. This is not altogether due to lack of capacity of any kind on the part of these pupils, and investigation will need to be made of the causes of this retardation and the means by which it can be partially checked. The fact that most of these pupils are able subsequently to become intelligent workers indicates that in some way we have not provided the special form of education suited to their needs. Further provision, however, will need to be made by means of continuation classes to provide for an extension of the education of all children up to the age of sixteen or seventeen years. In the case of those who cannot suitably proceed to a secondary course continued education during working-hours in association with the occupation in which they are engaged will need to be provided on lines similar to those laid down in the report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in Relation to Employment after the War, recently presented to the Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the British Board of Education. These provisions are now too well known to require further mention. It need only be stated that if we are to make the most of our most valuable national asset—namely, the development of all the powers of the youth of the Dominion—we must utilize to the full the opportunity presented for education in the years of adolescence. These years cover the period of greatest possible mental expansion as well as the period in which the abiding ideals of life are largely formed. Any community which neglects this opportunity of providing for the development of the powers not only of the brilliant children, but of every child in the Dominion, is imposing on itself an insuperable handicap against its industrial, commercial, and democratic progress. It is inconceivable that New Zealand, by a neglect to provide for a continuation of education through the years of adolescence, would voluntarily accept such a handicap.