

adopted, have been a distinctly retrograde step. An attempt was again made to change the method of appointing the Inspectors, and a motion providing for the appointment of all Inspectors by the Education Department instead of by the local Boards received a considerable measure of support. Although the proposal was rejected for the present the general feeling in the Conference was that the existing method of appointing the Inspectorate is illogical, and inconsistent with a national system of education, and if the Inspector-General has his way the time is not far distant when a change in the direction indicated will be effected.

Of the positive recommendations agreed on by the Conference the most important are (a) the abolition of the pupil teacher system, (b) the raising of the standard which children will be required to pass before they can be allowed to leave school; and (c) the provision, in the new regulations issued by the Conference, enabling Inspectors to hold a central examination for all sixth standard pupils living within a convenient radius. Taking the last first, we would point out that while the central examination arrangement might be a great convenience to the Inspectors it would be very palpably unfair to the children concerned. What the provision means is this: that instead of examining, for example, the Arthur Street, High Street, and Union Street Schools separately the Inspectors will have the power to examine all the sixth standard pupils from these three schools at one time and to hold this examination in some central school to be selected by themselves. Everyone knows that even under the most favorable circumstances children are nervous and excited at examination time, and if the examination is to be held amid surroundings that are entirely unfamiliar to them that nervousness will of course be greatly increased. All provisions regarding the examination of public schools are, by the Education Act, made applicable to the examination of private schools, so that under the new regulation it will be within the power of the Inspectors to hold the examination of all the sixth standard pupils from the Catholic schools at North-East Valley, Dunedin, and South Dunedin, at one central building, say, the Normal School or St. Joseph's. It is of course optional with the Inspectors whether they avail themselves of the power conferred in this regulation, and it is quite possible that the clause in question may not be actually enforced. Speaking for Otago, we have every ground for the fullest confidence in the reasonableness and considerateness of the Inspectorate; but looking at the matter from the point of view of the children we cannot honestly consider the new regulation an improvement.

A detailed discussion of the arguments for and against the abolition of the pupil teacher system would be of little interest to the general reader, and, as the recommendation on this point was carried with acclamation and will certainly be given effect to, it would besides be an entire waste of time. We will only observe in passing that as would-be teachers, under the new system, will be required to undergo a five-years' course of training, the number of teachers available is likely to become more limited than ever. With regard to the proposal to raise the standard of exemption from attendance at school, we do not hesitate to give our voice against the decision arrived at by the Conference. Hitherto the standard of exemption has been the fifth. The resolution adopted by the Conference has the effect of a recommendation to the Education Department that children under 14 years of age shall be compelled to attend school till they have passed the sixth standard. Abstractly and ideally, it is of course desirable that the child should be kept as long at school as possible, but in this workaday world, under the imperative necessity of keeping body and soul together, parents, like the rest of us, have to be content with something very far short

of the ideal. The recommendation has some prospect of being put into operation, seeing that the proposal originally emanated from the Inspector-General, but if it is given effect to, the hardship inflicted on poor parents with large families will be so grave that an agitation will be quickly set on foot for its repeal.

Throughout the whole course of the Conference, there was one, and only one, reference to the moral aspect of education. Mr. D. J. Cooper, M.A., senior inspector in New South Wales, addressed the Conference, and remarked, *inter alia*, that 'to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth of the Colony was the goal which all appeared to aspire to.' If only it were! We believe that in no country in the world is there a more gifted, a more earnest, or a more painstaking Inspectorate than we have in New Zealand, and the spectacle of so many able men devoting all their energies to an education that merely feeds the intellect, and starves the soul is a sight to make angels weep. The youth of the Colony require something more than the three Rs to help them over the moral and spiritual difficulties of life. They are looking to their instructors for bread; and in spite of the earnestness, ability, and culture of those over them, they are getting only a stone.

Notes

His Only Lapse

A story is going the rounds of our exchanges which, though it may be nothing more than the fabrication of an imaginative reporter, is still rather too good to be lost. We find it told thus in a Christchurch weekly: 'Is there anything known against this man?' asked Mr. V. G. Day, S.M., during the hearing of a charge of theft, at the Magistrate's Court on Saturday. 'Only that he is a married man,' replied the station sergeant. Thus, adds the Christchurch paper, is greatness thrust on our harmless sergeant.

Mr. Dooley on Divorce

Mr. Dooley has made a pungent, and in its way, a powerful contribution on American divorce in the 'New York Times.' We make the following extracts: 'Till death us do part,' says th' preacher. 'Or th' jury,' whispers th' blushin' bride. 'In Nebraska,' continues Dooley, 'th' shackles arre busted because father forgot to wipe his boots; in New York because mother knows a judge in South Dakota. The laws ought to be the same ivrywhere. Anny man ought to be able to get divorce with alimony simply by makin' an affidavit that th' lady's face has grown too bleak for his taste. Be hivins, Hinnissy, I'd go farther. I'd let anny man escape by jumpin' the contract.' 'What do ye raaly think?' asked Mr. Hinnissy. 'I think,' said Dooley, 'if people wanted to be divorced I'd let them, but I'd give th' children th' custody iv th' parents. They'd larn them to behave.'

The March of the Motor

Motoring is so eminently fashionable, and the mania is becoming so entirely universal, that anything in the nature of criticism or remonstrance can only be offered with bated breath. It is, therefore, in a becoming spirit of meekness and humility that, in view of the two fatal accidents near Christchurch the other week, and of the many minor casualties that are continually occurring, we venture to suggest that it is time that strict and definite regulations were put in force regarding the management of motor cars. The sublime disregard which the average motorist shows for all other traffic is a serious menace to the public safety, and unless the enthusiasts be brought to reason the

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