

at the entrance to the upper department of the school. The second consideration is that the lower division of the school would probably prove to be wholly self-supporting, or at all events the cost would not be greater to the Government than the education of the same number of pupils at any of the district schools. From calculations based on data in our possession, we have satisfied ourselves that, even under existing circumstances, the lower forms in the High School are not far from being self-supporting; and we feel warranted in believing that, if our recommendations are properly carried out, the proposed lower department of the school will not be long in fully attaining to this desirable position. In the very nature of the case it is the greater relative expense of providing the requisite teaching-power for the upper forms which renders the High School, as a whole, so costly to the Government in comparison with the number of pupils in attendance. It is evident that if the proposed lower division can be shown to be wholly or almost self-supporting, it disposes of the objection that may be urged against the maintenance at the public expense of a separate school department in which a portion of the instruction imparted is almost of the same kind as that provided in the upper classes of the ordinary district school.

“The division of the High School into upper and lower departments, separated by a strict examination, is in accordance with the recommendations made by the Schools Inquiry Commission for the better organization of the English middle-class schools. The main object which the English Commissioners had in view in recommending an examination at this stage, was to secure that the more elementary work done in the lower forms should be thoroughly mastered before the boys were promoted to the upper forms of the school. This object is, of course, as much entitled to consideration here as in England. But, in addition to this, there are other reasons, arising out of the circumstances of the province and colony, which render it desirable to place a somewhat strict examination at the entrance to the upper division of the school. Believing, as we have already stated, that the cost of the upper school must be defrayed to some extent from the public revenue, or from the proceeds of public endowments, and that the education which it imparts must continue to be a comparatively expensive one, we consider it all the more necessary to guard the entrance to it by such an examination as shall guarantee the diligence of the candidates for admission, and their fitness for receiving a higher culture. Besides the beneficial effects which such an examination would have on the school itself, it might also be expected to exercise a stimulating influence on the district schools throughout the country, whose best pupils would no doubt in many cases proceed to the High School to finish their education, or to prepare for entering the University.”

It would appear from the foregoing extract that the institution of an examination at the entrance of the upper department of the school was intended to serve a twofold purpose—in the first place, to promote the efficiency of both the divisions of the school; and, secondly, to secure that the true aims of the school should not be subordinated to the interests of any social class. Without desiring to make a recommendation on a matter which should be left to the discretion of the governing bodies, we think it useful to point out that, in the event of our proposals for the extension of secondary instruction by means of extra classes in the primary schools being carried into effect, such an arrangement as has been adopted at Dunedin would tend to consolidate our educational system by facilitating the passage from the primary to the secondary schools. A boy would then be able, after taking the full course of a primary school, to pass directly, at the age of from thirteen to fifteen, into the upper department of the secondary school; so that this department—which forms the true high school—would be brought into almost as close relations with the primary-school system as with its own lower department.

Division of the
year into
quarters or terms.

The division of the school-year and the arrangements as to holidays are by no means uniform throughout the colony. In the schools at Auckland, Nelson, and Dunedin the year is divided into four quarters of between ten and eleven weeks each; in the schools at Christchurch it is divided into three terms of thirteen weeks each; and in Wellington College into three terms of between fourteen and fifteen weeks each. In most of the schools from nine to eleven