

Education Department, fees were charged to all children receiving higher education. In fact, the district high school was an ordinary district school which was allowed to form certain senior classes for higher work, provision being made by the Board for a supply of specially qualified teachers for the work. Of late years, however, instruction in the district high schools has been made practically free. A most gratifying feature in connection with New Zealand education is the liberal system of land endowments which has been provided for all branches of education. As a result, not only is the public burden with respect to primary education lightened each year to the extent of £44,000, but about £30,000 is contributed towards the maintenance of twenty-five corporate endowed secondary schools subject to inspection by the Education Department. These secondary schools are not under the control of the Education Boards, but have their own independent governing bodies. Thus New Zealand has its primary-school system and its higher-primary or district-high-school system under the control of the Education Boards, and, apart from these, but with many links of connection, its system of endowed secondary schools. An excellent understanding appears to exist between the secondary and the primary schools. The teachers in the former schools are very often men and women who have received their training in primary-school work, and it is by no means unusual for teachers to transfer from one system to the other. The primary system is linked to the secondary system by a remarkably liberal system of scholarships described below.

Private Schools.

In Victoria the feeling survives in some circles that the State schools should not be availed of by parents who can afford to send their children to private schools. Accordingly, private primary schools flourish, although there is no system whereby the teachers of these schools can be trained in methods of teaching. In the most recent Victorian report the number of private and denominational schools is given at 798, with an enrolment of 42,229 pupils. I have no hesitation in saying that Victoria would be richer educationally if the great majority of the private primary schools did not exist. In New Zealand, on the other hand, private schools are few and unimportant. As most of them are denominational schools, they are on a higher plane educationally than the great majority of Victorian private schools. A recent computation shows only 300 private schools (including those engaged in secondary as well as in primary work), with an enrolment of but 15,600 pupils. Broadly speaking, therefore, the Board schools of New Zealand educate all of the children of school age, and there is consequently little chance of class or sectarian feeling being engendered.

PUBLIC INTEREST IN EDUCATION.

The above are the leading features of the New Zealand system, and it will be seen how radically different it is from that of Victoria. One fact which strikes the most casual observer is the intense interest taken by the public of New Zealand in educational questions. There is little doubt that this is due mainly to the system of local management. In Victoria the school is the "State school," and its efficiency or inefficiency is a concern of a far off, slow-moving Department. The most ordinary concerns, such as the erection of a fence or a porch, a couple of coats of paint, are matters for inspection and report and interminable delays. In New Zealand the school is regarded by the people of a district as "our school"; the provincial Board and the local Committee, both representing the householders, are responsible for keeping the building in repair, for providing for the comfort of teacher and children, and for maintaining the efficiency of their school. This public interest is reflected in the speeches of public men, and in newspaper articles, and it was certainly strange to me, as a Victorian, to find the newspapers throughout New Zealand printing telegraphed reports of great length concerning the proceedings of the Educational Conference in Wellington, dealing with such highly specialised subjects as the details of the programme of instruction, methods of inspection and examination, and the advantages of various suggested methods of training teachers.

While there are many economical advantages in a centralised system such as that of Victoria, it should not be forgotten that one of the greatest factors in educational efficiency is sympathetic co-operation between teachers and parents. The most important practical problem before the educationist to-day is to bring together school life and home life, to concentrate and unify all of the agencies which are ministering to the development of the child through his æsthetic, constructive, intellectual, and spiritual interests. How to make the schools minister directly to the needs of the community is the important matter, for that is the best system of education which turns out the type of men and women of which the country has most need. This will never be done satisfactorily while the school system is left wholly in the hands of officials and politicians, with the parents and the organized manufacturing and commercial interests holding aloof. The schoolmaster and the departmental expert must come out of their educational isolation and find out what the world of struggle and action outside the school requires of them. And at the same time it should be the ambition of the best representatives of genuine national progress, in whatever domain they are working, to make their influence felt in the national education system. The architects of Laputa, so Gulliver tells us, endeavoured to build from the roof downwards. Is this not the method of those who, while striving for national well-being, yet have no thought of or interest in the great work the schools are capable of doing? How this desideratum may best be obtained may be a matter for argument, but in a decentralised system, such as that of New Zealand, every great factor in national life can be brought to bear upon the school system at once.

Naturally, from the pure educationist's point of view, there are compensating disadvantages to local control, and even in local interest. Unintelligent interference with the work of the expert, favouritism, and petty tyrannies on the part of governing Committees, and neglect of important duties, are not unfrequent. But these results are really due to deficiency of interest in education on the part of the best men in the community, with the consequent handing-over of important functions to unworthy men. It may be that popular interest in educational problems often hampers and hinders the enthusiast and extremist, but it has this great advantage: that it compels him to demonstrate the