

and of syllabus of instruction is the great question, "What kind of men and women are your teachers? What are their ideals of life? What is their power of influencing others by example?" An education system to be efficient in the highest sense must be able to attract to its service the capable and enthusiastic, and must treat them fairly when it has them. Is it reasonable to expect that our service will continue to attract cultured men of gentlemanly instincts if they must inevitably look forward to life in a sparsely settled district with no better provision for their wives than the wretched quarters now supplied? And if we do not attract such, and are forced to employ the coarse-grained and boorish, or the social misfits and failures, no amount of expenditure upon administration will give us good results. As well might we run a draught horse in a smart hansom and expect him to hold his own because we have put a silver-plated harness on him and flog him with silk whipcord at 6d. a knot. In a New Zealand town a stranger judges from a view of the school property that the teacher's office is held in honour and that he is given a chance to hold his own in the life of the district. I should be sorry to think that public appreciation of the work of the teachers of Victoria is reflected in the accommodation provided for their families. It is not, I think, an exaggeration to say that of some twenty-five residences which I noted in different districts of New Zealand the worst was equal to the best I have seen in Victoria. It is, perhaps, worthy of remark that these residences and grounds have been provided at the instance not of departmental officials, but of Education Boards and Committees representing the world of business. Business-men probably see that in education the only economy is to get the best, and that anything much short of the best is extravagance. Would that the Victorian public would realise what a potent influence for good in a district is a high-minded teacher, and what a potent influence for ill is the man of the opposite type. The one cannot be valued enough, the other is a source of active mischief. It is possible to find in our midst school communities not five miles apart which vary so much in manners, in mental activity, and in general resourcefulness that they might be in different continents. And the whole difference lies in the character of the teachers of the local schools. I repeat, most emphatically, that it pays to employ the best men and women as teachers and to spend money in getting them, in training them, and in keeping them. And in this connection we cannot do better than follow New Zealand's example and provide residences where a worthy home life is possible.

School Buildings.

In my annual reports of 1902 and 1903 I spoke very strongly of the bad architecture of the Victorian school buildings. But one does not realise so fully how faulty is the lighting of our rooms, how deficient they are in reasonable comfort, and how ungenerous is our allotment of air-space for each child, until he travels in such a country as New Zealand, where different provincial districts have vied with one another in producing a suitable type of building. It is natural to expect that the buildings erected from twenty to thirty years ago, before so great attention was paid to school hygiene, should be more or less deficient, and the older buildings in New Zealand resemble those in Victoria in being copies of poor English models. But, while our educational experts and our departmental architects have not been sufficiently aware of the great improvements in school architecture of recent years, the ordinary business architects employed by the School Boards of New Zealand have steadily improved their type of buildings. Consequently the great majority of buildings, especially in the North Island, are good specimens of modern school architecture. In the Auckland District and in the Wanganui district I saw what I considered the best types of schools—well lighted, well ventilated, and warmed, roomy, and admitting of satisfactory organization of school-work. I have arranged to secure plans of several buildings. I was much impressed by the experiments in school architecture in progress in the Wanganui district, and admired the buildings recently provided at Hawera and Palmerston North. These consist of well-planned class-rooms grouped round a central assembly hall. They are excellently lighted, and the architect has kept in view the utility of his building rather than the outside appearance. Separate rooms, with special equipment, are provided for science, for drawing, and for manual training, and the teachers find the school building a delight to teach in.

The following quotation from the report of Mr. P. Goyen, Chief Inspector of the Otago Board of Education, who visited Victoria in 1902, is unfortunately too true:—

I visited the Victorian schools after an absence of nearly a quarter of a century; it was natural, therefore, that I should expect to see great improvement in buildings, in equipment, and in methods. I was disappointed, for I found that what these were twenty-five years ago they are in great measure now. There are the same ill-lighted rooms, the same ill-designed and comfortless seats and desks, the same absence of class-rooms for infant departments, the same sacrifice of utility and internal neatness to exterior architectural effect, the same distractions from the teaching of three or four classes in one long room, the same insanitary method of disposing the hats and cloaks along the back wall of the school-room, and the same dismal lobbies. . . . Some of the country residences I saw are unworthy of the name "residence"; they are properly denoted by the term by which they are sometimes officially known—"quarters"—and they possess all the qualities connoted by that ugly term. One would think that the Education Departments had gone out of their way to belittle their teachers in the eyes of those among whom they send them to live. Great State Departments seem to have in them very little of the spirit of humanity.

The pity is that Victoria has got such a poor result from so large an expenditure of money. Our buildings are more elaborate and costly than those of other Australian States, but, unfortunately, external elaboration cannot make up for faulty internal arrangement, and we could well have spared the architectural "features" in favour of reasonable efficiency. As it is, some of our costly piles are but brick and mortar out of place. On dull days it is no uncommon thing for the children of a class to be unable to see to write efficiently, while the prevalence of colds and other ailments in our city schools in the winter months is directly due to bad arrangement of rooms and corridors. In addition to the unwelcome legacy of belated repairs which the Department has to face, there is the undoubted duty of undoing the mistakes of the bad architecture of the past. Efficient education is concerned with the physical development of the scholars, as well as with their mental and spiritual development, and these three interact upon one another. The experience of educationists the world over is that true