

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

MONDAY, 17TH OCTOBER, 1904.

GEORGE HOGGEN, Inspector-General of Schools and Secretary for Education, examined before the Sub-committee.

1. *The Chairman (Mr. J. Allen).*] Last time the Committee met we commenced by asking Sir Edward Gibbes some questions upon this letter of the 10th February, 1904, from the Secretary for Education to the Education Boards. It is on this Paper E.-1E. I think we had better take that as the basis of our inquiry to start with. The first part of it deals with the entrance to the training colleges?—Shall I state under what circumstances the letter was written?

2. Yes, please?—After the recommendations were made by the Education Committee last session the Minister instructed me to make arrangements to meet the four Boards at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and to consult with them as to what steps should be taken to carry out the recommendations of the Committee. I did so. Unfortunately the sub-committee of the Board appointed to meet me at Auckland could not meet me, except the Chairman and two of the Inspectors. One of the Inspectors was not there all the time, but the other was, also the Secretary to the Board. We went into the matter in detail, and I was taken round to two schools that it was suggested might be used—at all events for a time. It is to this that I refer in my memorandum to the Minister in which I say there are one or two schools that could be used temporarily. The Chairman then said—of course, he could not speak for the Board—that perhaps on the whole he agreed with the Inspector, that it was better for the Department to manage the Training College at Auckland. Then in Wellington a sub-committee was also appointed to meet me. It consisted of three or four persons—I do not remember whether it was three or four—but two of those were present, Mr. Bradey, the Chairman, and Mr. Lee. The two Inspectors were also present, and the Wanganui Inspector. I believe they invited the Hawke's Bay Board to be represented and they may have invited other Boards, but as to that I do not know. The meeting agreed to the general outline of the scheme, which was roughly the same as is laid down here, and they agreed without any great amount of discussion, after Mr. Lee and two of the Inspectors had spoken in favour of it, that the Training College ought to be under the central Department. They asked me whether in that case the Government would find all the money, and I said I supposed that, if the Department took the responsibility, the Government would have to find all the money directly—probably it would indirectly in other cases, but it would find it directly if the Department took the thing over. Then I went to Christchurch and met the sub-committee there twice. We had perhaps the most satisfactory sitting in Christchurch in one respect, in that every member of the sub-committee appointed attended, and so the discussion was very full. Two of the Inspectors were there on one occasion, and all three of them on the other. On one of the occasions practically the whole of the North Canterbury Board was present. Mr. Inspector Wood expressed the opinion that the College ought to be under the Department, but none of the other Inspectors expressed an opinion at the meeting. The Board expressed the opinion very clearly that they thought it ought to be under the Board. We discussed several details. One of the chief difficulties was the size of the existing school, the Normal School, and the supplying of the school wants of Christchurch if that school were reduced below its present attendance. The other difficulties were not of such great importance. The allowances, I fancy, the Board thought were a little on the liberal side for the first year. Mr. Inspector Wood was very strongly of opinion that the course should be two years, and several members of the Board agreed in that, but this opinion was not so strongly expressed as it was at Dunedin. That was the general result of the two meetings at Christchurch. At Dunedin the Board held the same opinion with regard to administration. I do not think the Inspectors expressed any opinion at that meeting. The details were discussed pretty fully. I forgot to say that at Christchurch Mr. Watkins, the Acting-Principal of the Normal School, was present, and at Dunedin Mr. White, the Acting-Principal of the Normal School there, was present. I understood that it was the desire of the Otago Board—in fact, it was conveyed to me by the Secretary—that Mr. White and I should confer beforehand as to certain details: and I conferred not only with Mr. White, but with the Inspectors, and the consequence was that we got through the whole business in about two hours and a half. We dealt chiefly with points of detail. They did not think so strongly as the Christchurch Board that the allowances were on the liberal side. These were more liberal than the Board had been paying before, but there was present in their minds the thought that if they offered less than the salary of a fourth-year pupil-teacher very few boys would be likely to go into the Training School. I do not say that their opinion was stronger than that at Christchurch, but there was a stronger expression of the view that the training should be for two years. After these conferences I informed the two Boards that the result of the conferences would be put before them as a definite proposition in the form of a letter, and this is the letter of the 10th February.

3. You have touched upon the matter of control, and I would like to ask one or two questions about that before going on to the letter of the 10th February. You are aware, of course, of the Committee's report of last year with regard to the question of control?—Yes.

2—I. 14A.