

educational system, in one form or another, are heard, possibly in many instances with but slight foundation and little knowledge of the real conditions. Whether any such criticisms are justified or not, it will be your part to do your share to secure that no legitimate demand to bring the education provided into closer accordance with the requirements of the various classes in the community remains, so far as you are concerned, unsatisfied. It is my duty, also, to take steps to obtain the same result, but it is also mine to see that in meeting these wants all economic waste is avoided. Unfortunately, questions of education, like other matters, cannot be separated from the question of money, and while I trust I shall always be found doing my best to secure adequate monetary provision for all legitimate needs, and to cultivate among my colleagues and fellow members of Parliament an ungrudging and generous spirit in dealing with educational estimates, I must be prepared at the same time to show that none of the money provided is wasted; that the public get not only good value for that money in the quality of the education given, but that good results cannot be obtained with less. Doubtless this is not a point of view that appeals so directly to you, but it will be for you who are directly engaged in the work of teaching to point out how far, as the outcome of your experience, you are enabled to say that any waste may be avoided. It is perhaps not necessary to remind you that where economic working is present there is so much the more to be expended in other ways, and that there is no inducement to further expenditure so powerful as the conviction that what is already spent is well spent and spent to the best advantage. On the constitution of this Conference a good deal has been heard from various quarters, from those who have considered that in any general educational conference the work done by the local bodies entitles them to be adequately represented. Possibly it has not been made sufficiently clear from the outset that this Conference is, and has all along been, intended to be general only by way of distinction from other conferences with which the public are more familiar—training-colleges and inspectors' conferences, for instance, held at much the same time, and not entirely dissociated from it in *personnel*—and that it is, in especial, opinions expressed in the light of professional experience that on the present occasion it is desired to elicit. The education system from an administrative point of view is quite enough by itself to occupy the attention of a separate conference such as those that have been held before, and I hope to see held again, when representative members of Education Boards and their secretaries or chief inspectors have met to discuss matters of common interest. From the last Conference of this nature I cull the following topics of discussion: Building grants; attendance basis of teachers' salaries; free school-books; conveyance of children to country schools; election of Boards; method of appointing teachers; allowances to School Committees; grants for new schools in newly settled districts; and centralized schools. These are all topics of the first importance, on which Education Boards are entitled to speak with authority; but I think I may fairly say that they are practically all outside the scope of the present Conference. No doubt, from some of the questions you yourselves might properly be invited to discuss, questions of more or less administrative character cannot be separated, just as matters that specially concern the efficient working of the Education Boards have points of contact with matters of purely professional concern; but none the less it would clearly be a mistake to attempt to combine both purposes in a single Conference, if only on account of the large number of persons that would have a good title to be invited as members. You have a wide field before you—you may be apt, indeed, to be impressed with the richness of the number of topics that suggest themselves, and may be perhaps in doubt, through the very wealth of subjects, as to what directions your deliberations will take. You are a professional Conference, and to the professional head of the public education service, the Inspector-General, I leave the duty of putting before you in a more precise shape a few of the points in which some improvement can be effected. Whatever notices of motion are given, whatever discussion takes place, I am certain the Conference will deal with the questions in the most impartial manner, and with a view only to the general good. On many points, doubtless, you will have criticisms to make; but, so far as the Department is concerned, I can assure you that the criticisms will be welcomed. A contented and happy life is something worth securing; and that you should be contented and happy in your professional capacity—happy in the consciousness of doing good work in the service of the country, and contented with the conditions under which you work—is what we all desire; but at the same time we must recognize that discontent is the mother of progress, and if, in our expressions of discontent with things as they are, we secure any definite step of progress towards things as they should be, I need scarcely add that I shall be content. With these few remarks I will ask the Inspector-General to take the chair in order that you may proceed with your deliberations. I am sorry that I shall not be able to promise to be with you all the time, but I shall endeavour, if other public business permits, to drop in occasionally to listen to your discussions; and I hope that the results may be for the benefit of our educational system.

Mr. G. HOGBEN, Inspector-General of Schools, then took the chair. He said he desired first of all to echo the sentiments expressed by the Minister in the welcome he had extended to all. He regarded that as a specially good opportunity for them to realize that the several parts of the educational system of the Dominion must essentially be connected, because they related to the life of one people; and, if they had not recognised that formally before, surely it was not too late to amend the fault, and try to recognise it now. More and more throughout the progressive part of the world it was recognized that you could separate no part of an education system from the rest without injury to it and without injury to the rest; and he hoped they would be able—though of necessity there must be much tentative work in their deliberations—that they would be able to accomplish something substantial. It would be something substantial if they understood that the several parts of the system did belong to one another. The aim of the Conference was the consideration of the broad questions that had a direct bearing on the co-ordination of the several parts of the education system of New Zealand. There had been many theories as to the basis of co-ordination in education: those depended largely upon the ideal of education adopted. The ideal that appealed most to him was that of social efficiency—that was, "the development of the