

ought to occupy itself with anything but primary-school education. The vast majority of primary-school children left school to enter the industrial world, and their leaving-certificate ought to be only incidentally a card of entrance to a secondary school. He thought Mr. Gray's motion ought to receive the support of the Conference.

Mr. BEVAN-BROWN said it seemed to him that the somewhat narrow issue raised at first was beginning to open up very much larger issues. It was a matter of importance to the Conference that they should weigh well what they were doing. If the resolutions of the Conference were those of an executive body, if Mr. Gray's amendment were carried it would alter the constitution of the education system throughout New Zealand most materially. He was of opinion that it was arguable that all education should be free from the primary school to the university; but if it was to be free, the State would have to pay the piper. If Mr. Gray's resolution were carried out, it would very soon end in there being no paying pupils, and all secondary schools would be free. If that were so, the capitation allowed would not enable the secondary schools to be kept at their present level. He was not arguing against free education at secondary schools; but was the State prepared to pay for it? His opinion was that at least 50 per cent.—nearly 75 per cent.—of those who now got secondary education could easily pay the fees. The question was whether the tendency to do everything for parents and leave them nothing to do, or to make no sacrifice, was a good thing. Then they had also to consider the poor man. They wanted some kind of sorting-machine which would sort the capacity of the children, so that they would be able to say, "It would be to the advantage of the State to educate this child from the primary school to the university." They must have some method of sorting. At present it was by the rough method of examination. He had very great sympathy with Mr. Gray's scheme. Mr. Gray said that the sorting-apparatus should be a joint consultation between the parent, the Inspector, and the headmaster or headmistress. Now, if the head teacher were always like Mr. Gray, he (Mr. Bevan-Brown) would trust his judgment. But many head teachers had not Mr. Gray's experience or discernment, and would be open to pressure from parents or committees, so that grave evils might result.

Mr. MARSHALL desired to explain that his resolution applied to secondary schools only. He intended afterwards to submit resolutions dealing with technical education, and with the education of those children who could not remain at secondary schools at least two or three years. He wished to widen the door to the lower grades of secondary education.

The CHAIRMAN said one impression ought to be removed entirely—namely, that £4 5s. was what was being paid. The income from endowments and capitation together could not amount to less than £12 10s. on any free pupil. That must be borne in mind; and if they took the £12 10s. and multiplied it by twenty-five they would find the number that had been mentioned—they would find that it would pay both salaries and incidental expenses; because when arriving at the income from endowments there had already been taken away from the calculation all the expenditure on buildings, repairs, mortgages, interest, &c. The amount of contribution was more like £17 or £18 per head. As the number of pupils increased, the capitation would rise, and the two together—endowment and capitation—could not be less than £12 10s.

The Conference divided on the first part of Mr. Gray's amendment—viz., "That the avenue to secondary education should be quite free and unrestricted, eligibility therefor to be dependent upon one primary-school leaving-certificate, awarded on the joint representation of the headmaster and an Inspector of Schools."—Ayes, 30; Noes, 14: majority for, 16.—Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GRAY moved, That the kind of secondary education to be attended by any one holding a primary-school leaving-certificate be determined by (1) the aptitude and capacity discovered during the last three years of the primary-school course, (2) by the indication of the parent regarding the time—one, two, three, or four years—during which the child may attend a secondary institution. He believed that every boy or girl who wished to attend a secondary institution of a classical or of a scientific order should have the option of doing so if he was going to stay there for such a time as would be profitable to himself and to the institution concerned. The idea underlying the motion was that parents or schoolmasters should indicate the duration of the period for which the scholar would attend school. He was of opinion that some kind of bond or guarantee of good faith should be given. If they got into closer touch with the parents of the children in the primary schools as to their aims in respect to their children, and if they were perfectly straightforward with regard to the aptitudes and capacities of the scholars, much good might be done. The period for which the child attended school should be a determining factor.

Mr. FIRTH had much pleasure in seconding the motion. The point as to the length of time a pupil was to stay at a secondary school was a most important one. He could not, however, see how the mover was going to get his guarantee. Still, that was merely a matter of detail. He thoroughly agreed with the principle enunciated.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not want to discuss the question from the chair; at the same time he thought they were rather unfortunate in discussing it before they knew what secondary education was. They had not yet determined what secondary education was. The course they were taking was not very logical. There were several kinds of secondary education. We had recognized them partly in this Dominion, and they were recognized more or less in several other parts of the world. The only distinction that he could find that was common to them all was that of age. The ages were not alike. But that was the only point that was common to all the divisions or classifications of secondary education—the classification with regard to age. He thought that was tolerably sound. He believed that the mental capacities of children corresponded very closely to the physical growth of the children. He thought the age—rough index as it was in some cases—was probably the soundest of all if not too strictly adhered to. They found children going to secondary schools—real secondary schools—between twelve and fourteen. There were a few outside fourteen, but not many under twelve. The great tendency in the English schools was not to