

of the new schools that were now being built consisted of three rooms; there was not one single class-room; and in each of the three rooms the attendance varied from 119 to 130. The teacher had no class-room to which she could take any class, and so the 120 or 130 children must remain in one room the whole time. It would be a good idea if the Education Department issued instructions to the architects in various parts of the Dominion to have the infant-schools built on the latest plans. In some schools the children sat on forms without backs to them for the period of four, five, and five and a half hours; and when a request was made that that should be remedied they were always told that it could not be done—that it would be too expensive. These were some of the disadvantages the infant-school teacher laboured under. The other members of the Conference would sympathize with her when she said that the infant-schoolrooms and the staffing were not what they ought to be. The present methods were the only ones the infant-school teachers could employ with the present buildings, rooms, and staff at their command.

Mr. GEORGE said he had been misunderstood in the remarks he made on the previous day. He recognised that many of the infant-school mistresses were doing heroic work. As far as he had seen their work, he wished to give them every credit. He hoped that one of the outcomes of the Conference would be that infant-schoolrooms would be built on better models, and that the defects that at present existed would be remedied.

The CHAIRMAN thought it would be just as well if he corrected a wrong impression that might get abroad. The views he held were based on the experience he gained two or three years ago when he visited Europe and the United States. People who compared the schools of other countries with those of New Zealand were very apt to take one or two show schools of those countries, look at the arrangements there, and assume that all the schools in those countries were similar; and then they compared them, not with our best schools, perhaps not always with our average schools, and they condemned our schools. There were a great many things we might learn from America. He would like to see our infant-schools like the best of the American schools. But our average infant-school was better than the average infant-school in America; and he had no hesitation in saying that our infant-schools were better than the average infant-schools in Great Britain. But our best schools were not equal to their best schools. It was a matter of money to some extent, and a matter of arrangement. What he would like to see was that our schools should be something like the schools in Rome. He referred specially to the Scuola Regina Elena, a description of which was given by him in the Education Department paper entitled, "Special Reports on Educational Subjects: No. 7—Schools and other Educational Institutions in Europe and America (Report of the Inspector-General's Visit to)."

Education up to Seventeen Years.

Mr. GRAY moved, That the education of every child should be continued up to the age of seventeen. His idea was that every child should remain under instruction till at least the age of seventeen years. If through force of circumstances a child had to leave the day-school and go to work, then that child should still have the opportunity of carrying on its instruction. The resolution was most general in its form. It simply meant that every child between the ages of three or five and seventeen should be given some kind of instruction.

Mr. HILL seconded the motion. His view of the matter was this: that pupils having obtained leaving-certificates should be required to attend continuation classes, in order that they might begin to specialize. In the ordinary school course the pupils were not able to obtain much in the way of specialization. The country required that some attention should be given to that aspect of school training. It seemed to him that they had not done sufficient yet in the case of these pupils, because they had not provided continuation classes for their benefit. He thought this subject opened out a very important economic question. Many of our boys and girls at the present time went out into the world without the slightest preparation, and simply became errand-boys and nurse-girls. He wanted to know whether that was the purpose of our primary-school training. The children he had referred to should attend continuation classes.

Mr. GOYEN said he could not go as far as Mr. Gray on this question, but he was prepared to go a long way. It seemed to him that they had now entered upon the consideration of one of the most important subjects to be brought before the Conference: he referred to the position of the pupils who left school at fourteen and who did not attend any school afterwards. "Three categories of children," said Mr. Goyen, "are to be provided for—(1) those who leave school at thirteen or fourteen; (2) those who leave school at fifteen or sixteen; (3) those who remain at school to eighteen or nineteen. The third are those who recruit the professional life of the country; the second, a much larger number, recruit the *élite* of the commercial and industrial workers; and the first recruit the workers on a lower plane. The primary school provides for the first category, and the secondary or the technical school for the second and third. Is this provision sufficient for purposes of civic and economic equipment? For the second and third, yes, if the schools are adequately staffed and equipped; for the first, no. It is certain that an education that terminates at thirteen or fourteen does not provide this equipment, and it is also certain that much of the money spent on education that terminates at fourteen yields a very inadequate return in the shape of increased national efficiency. At the most critical period of life, and just when their education is beginning to operate most efficiently, boys and girls pass from the discipline of the school to the streets; where they are left to themselves, and soon forget everything learnt at school except the mechanical parts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. How is this to be remedied? How is the nation to get an adequate return for the huge sum of money spent in elementary education? There is, I think, but one efficient remedy—namely, the establishment of continuation classes at which attendance shall be compulsory to the age of seventeen or eighteen. This is what the most efficiently educated nations of Europe have done, and what the School Boards of Scotland are now empowered to do by the new Education Act, which says, 'It shall be the duty of a School