

section 59 of that Act an employer or contractor is obliged to retain in his hands one-fourth part of the money payable under the contract to the contractor or subcontractor, until the expiration of thirty-one days after the completion of the work. It has been held that the work was not completed until the expiration of the period of maintenance—usually a period of three months after the completion of the work as ordinarily understood. This frequently meant that a builder, for example, was kept out of his money for four months after job was finished. The amendment provides that the retention of the one-fourth as before mentioned shall be for thirty-one days after the completion of the work in the ordinary sense.

1914, No. 53. The Inspection of Machinery Amendment Act, 1914.—This Act makes various amendments of minor importance in the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1908.

1914, No. 54. The New Zealand Loans Amendment Act, 1914.—This Act amends in various particulars the provisions of the New Zealand Loans Act, 1908.

1914, No. 55. The Pensions Amendment Act, 1914.—This Act extends the benefits of the Pensions Act, 1913, in several matters of minor importance.

1914, No. 56. The Education Act, 1914.—This Act recasts the whole of the law relating to public schools, secondary schools, technical schools, and special schools. The principal changes introduced are as follows:—

*Reorganization of the Department of Education.*—The Inspector-General of Schools becomes Director of Education, and the Assistant Inspector-General of Schools becomes Assistant Director. The position of Secretary for Education is abolished. The Inspectors of Schools, who have hitherto been officers of the Education Boards, are transferred to the Department. The transfer will result in a very considerable reduction of the expenses of administration.

*Reduction of the Number of Education Districts.*—Provision is made for the constitution of not less than seven and not more than nine education districts, to be determined on the report of a special Commission to be set up for the purpose. At present there are thirteen education districts, each under the jurisdiction of an Education Board.

Every education district is divided into urban areas and a rural area. An urban area consists of a borough or a group of boroughs having more than 8,000 inhabitants. Where a majority of the School Committees in an urban area make application to the Board to be constituted an urban school district the members of the Board for that urban area are to be elected on the municipal franchise on the same day as the election of Borough Councillors—that is, the last Wednesday in April in every second year. The rural area is divided into three wards. The members for each ward of the rural area and all urban areas other than urban school districts are, as now, to be elected by the members of the School Committees. The number of members for the rural area is six—two for each ward. The number of members for each urban area is two for each 60,000 or part of 60,000 inhabitants.

*Council of Education.*—A Council of Education is established whose duty is to report to the Minister—

(a.) Upon methods or developments in national education which in its opinion it is desirable to introduce into New Zealand:

(b.) Upon any matters concerning the provision of facilities for education in the Dominion or in any district thereof, and upon the co-ordination of the work carried on by the various bodies controlling education:

(c.) Upon any other matters in connection with education referred to it by the Minister.

To obviate the necessity for frequent meetings of the Council the Minister is given power to constitute from time to time District Advisory Committees to afford assistance and advice with regard to matters concerning one district only.

*Election of School Committees.*—Members of School Committees formerly held office for one year, and were elected at the meetings of householders held in April. Under the Act the members of the Committee for each urban school district are to be elected on the municipal franchise on the day for the election of Borough Councillors, and to hold office for two years. In all other cases the School Committees are to be elected by the meeting of householders, and are to hold office for one year. One change is introduced in regard to nominations. All nominations must be made previous to the date of election. No nominations are to be received at the public meeting of householders.

*New Schools: Appointment of Teachers.*—The power of the Boards to establish new schools are slightly limited. The Minister is given a voice, on the advice of the Council, in deciding the question whether a new school should be established.

In regard to the appointment of teachers Committees are still to be consulted, but no choice is to be given them except in the case of equality of merit among the teachers who are candidates.

Provision is made for the grading of teachers: with the centralization of the Inspectors a Dominion scheme of grading will become possible.

Provision is made for rules as to sick-leave on pay.

*Staffs and Salaries in Public Schools.*—The Act provides for a liberal increase of salaries, and also for a small immediate improvement of the staff, and ultimately for a considerable improvement.

*Secondary Education.*—The provisions relating to secondary education are rearranged in a more or less logical order. Grants are increased to the secondary schools having little or no endowments, so as to enable considerably better salaries to be paid to the assistants in those schools.