

1138. There does not appear to be any relation between the salaries paid and the relative size of the districts.

1139. (2) *Duplication of clerical work as between the Department and the Boards due to the Boards being the intermediary between teachers and the Department and between School Committees and the Department.*

1140. There is much unnecessary correspondence and much duplication of effort which could be avoided by a central controlling authority. One simple illustration is the payment of teachers' salaries. The Department provides the money and could just as easily pay the teachers direct without any appreciable increase in staff.

1141. **There is another vital reason why control should be vested in an independent body, and that is in connection with capital expenditure on school buildings and sites.** There is a tendency on the part of each Board to obtain as much as possible from the State by way of capital expenditure. **It is accordingly politically difficult to exercise that measure of control over capital expenditure which the present state of the finances of the country demands.**

1142. There is no reason to suppose that it would be impossible for New Zealand to administer education as cheaply as does Australia. If the mean of the Australian costs—i.e., 4s. 10d.—be taken as a reasonable basis of calculation, then the administrative costs in New Zealand under a reorganized scheme should not amount to more than £55,000, whereas the actual cost in 1930 was £107,000. **A saving of at least £50,000 should be possible once a centralized system is properly established, and this does not take into account further savings which would accrue by making available a considerable portion of the existing office accommodation at present used by Education Boards.** It is true in connection with any organization that the more involved the avenues of expenditure the higher must be the cost of administration; and it is especially essential in times like the present to eliminate all superfluous overhead costs.

1143. Lest the term "centralized control" be misunderstood, we would state that we advocate that increased responsibilities should devolve upon School Committees or School Councils. This would maintain and further stimulate public interest.

1144. It would not be out of place to refer to the fact that the Economy Committee set up in 1921 expressed the following opinion in regard to the administration:—

We have come to the conclusion that the additional cost of administration through district Education Boards much outweighs any advantage that comes from the local interest it may create. Decentralization is good if control is retained, but under present conditions effective control is lost. The powers of Education Boards have been reduced recently in the case of appointments, but they still have the spending, with practically little control being exercised over them, of large sums of money provided by the State. The salaries paid by some of the Boards to members of their staffs is an instance of this. We consider the time has arrived when Boards should be dispensed with, and their duties undertaken by the Department of Education, only the present local School Committees being retained.

1145. In this view we entirely concur, being convinced that a large saving can be made without impairing in any degree the efficiency of the education system of New Zealand.

FUTURE CONTROL OF EDUCATION.

1146. **In our view, the most important of the recommendations made in our interim report is the creation of a National Board of Education, which should have full control of education administration and be directly responsible to Parliament.** The first duty of such a Board should be to make a survey of all the educational facilities throughout the Dominion, with a view to the elimination of overlapping and the introduction of a system which would secure co-ordination, thus abolishing the waste of effort which characterizes the present system. We have suggested the setting-up of a special Board for the reason that we believe that the Education Department, with its heavy expenditure, its large staff, and ever-increasing activities, is too extensive an undertaking for control by one administrative head, in view of the academic, administrative, and financial questions involved.

1147. The possibility of reform and the field for endeavour on the part of a National Board of Education and School Committees or Councils are so large that they need no stressing, and in view of the huge expenditure of over £3,000,000 annually, we would urge that every effort be made to place the administration of this important public undertaking on a sound basis.

PRIMARY-SCHOOL BOOKS.

1148. We also recommended in our interim report that there be no alteration in the primary-school books for the next five years. This recommendation would involve either the extension of the present publishing arrangement by three years or the acquisition of the copyright by the Department and the calling for tenders for the printing of school-books. We do not advocate the extension of the present arrangement without a substantial reduction being made by the publishers in the retail price of the books.

1149. **We therefore recommend an extension of the present arrangement only if the publishers will immediately reduce the retail prices of the books by at least 25 per cent. (on average), and agree to hand over the New Zealand copyright to the Department at the expiration of the extended period at a cost not exceeding £500.**

1150. The alternative is that the Department should prepare fresh manuscript, and call for tenders for the publication of a new series of books.