EDUCATING
NEW
ZEALAND
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EDUCATING NEW ZEALAND
THIS SURVEY was begun by Dr C. E. Beeby, who collected some of the material on which it is based, sketched out the general pattern of the book, and actually wrote a small part of it. Finding himself hard-pressed for time, he asked me to collaborate with him, only to discover a little later that his official duties prevented him from going on with the work at all. Eventually I took over full responsibility for the survey on the understanding that what had already been written by Dr Beeby, or by the two of us in collaboration, could be used as it stood. Actually, most of Chapter 1 is really Dr Beeby's, though I have made some additions and alterations that slightly change the original emphasis. But for one or two short passages the rest of the book is my own. Having made this explanation, [I hasten to say that all the opinions expressed must now be regarded as mine.] The book makes no pretence at comprehensiveness. It does, indeed, trace the larger movements in
our educational history, but there are considerable
omissions. Of these the private schools (including
the free kindergartens), native education, special
schools and classes, and child welfare are among the
more obvious. Such omissions are partly due to
mere limitations of space, and partly to the fact that
the aim was not so much to tell the whole story of
New Zealand education in brief as to show some-
thing of the way in which educational ideas brought
from Britain have been worked out and modified
in the colonial environment.

My indebtedness to published works on New
Zealand education is, I hope, adequately acknowl-
edged in the text and in the note on sources. In
addition I have received generous help of various
kinds from the staffs of Centennial House and of
the New Zealand Council for Educational Research
as well as from several other people. I should
particularly like to thank those who read and
criticised the typescript, especially Mr C. L. Bailey,
who not only assisted me in this way but also
allowed me to use some unpublished material of his
own.

WELLINGTON

May 1941

A. E. CAMPBELL
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The ‘Uniform’ System, 1899

A cartoon by Ashley Hunter reproduced from The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies’ Journal of 6 May 1899. The explanation to the cartoon runs: ‘The public is beginning to realise the fact that our present methods of national education may not be absolutely perfect, and the question is being asked whether the educational clothing which a boy receives under the “Uniform Standard” system is that which best fits him for the practical work of life.’

An Infant’s Thoughts, circa 1850

This page is taken from The Child’s Book of Poetry published by The Religious Tract Society, London, and used in some New Zealand schools of the provincial period.

A Public School 1872

From a photograph supplied by J. L. McG. Watson of Invercargill.

A Public School of To-day

From a photograph by John Parr, Auckland; supplied by the Education Department.

An Overcrowded Classroom 1919

From a photograph supplied by Sir Thomas Hunter.
Illustrations

Physical Culture 1913 facing page 98

Physical Culture 1941 98
From a photograph by K. C. Reid; supplied by the Education Department.

Secondary School Cadet Musketry Instruction 116
From a photograph by The Evening Post of the Wellington College Cadets.

Inter-school Rugby 116
From a photograph by The Evening Post.

The Engineering Shop at a Technical College 140
From a photograph by F. G. Barker supplied by The Director, Wellington Technical College.

A Typical Cookery Classroom 140
From a photograph by Green and Hahn, Christchurch, supplied by the Education Department.

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From a photograph by The Weekly News supplied by L. J. Wild, Feilding.

Bus Transport for School Children 182
From a photograph supplied by the Education Department.
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM of New Zealand as it stands today is incomprehensible unless one bears ever in mind that it originated and developed in a British colony in the nineteenth century. England during this period was building up a national school system which provided an obvious model for Britons overseas; but although the English and the New Zealand systems still show strong resemblances they are now in some ways very different. Neither the resemblances nor the differences can be fully understood apart from the fundamental fact that New Zealand was a colony.

The psychology of colonisation has yet to be written, but anyone who has lived in a colony knows that life, instead of being, as one might expect, simpler than in the homeland, is in some respects more complex. There are, within any colony, certain internal strains that an old and culturally self-sufficient land is spared, strains that exist both in its group life and in the minds of its individual citizens,
Nowhere do these strains and consequent lines of cleavage show more clearly than in the education system. Ultimately the stresses come from a division of loyalties that reveals itself not only in the first generation but also, with somewhat weakened force, in their children and their children's children. The homeland continues to exercise an attraction that, in certain spheres, may far outweigh the effects of the new and different physical and social environment. The colonist does not instantaneously develop a new philosophy of education by crossing the Equator. He may, indeed, become thereby more than ever wedded to the old, for nostalgia is one of the dominant influences in his life, and, culturally and educationally, he is less interested in adapting himself to his new environment than in surrounding himself with the institutions and ideas that formed the background of existence in the homeland. Especially is he concerned to give his children an education that shall link them to the life he has known. Cultural continuity is to the colonist of even greater importance than practical adaptation.

This is the key to the understanding of colonial life. Without it one would judge the colonist to be even more inept than the rest of humanity in evolving social institutions organically related to the kind of life that is being led. Seen sympathetically, the colonist's desire to hedge himself around with a barrier of familiar social institutions is quite under-
standable, even when those institutions are ludicrously ill-adapted to their purpose in the new land. Thousands of miles from home, with the very heavens unfamiliar and the earth around an unexplored wilderness, the early colonists in New Zealand must have felt that their daily physical life provided them with enough adventure without their experimenting with new forms of social institution.* They were, after all, not professional adventurers like the early whalers and sealers, but law-abiding family men anxious to find in the new world the chances denied them in the old. If they could not surround themselves immediately with the flowers and trees and quiet hills of England, they could at least transplant the forms of social life with which they were familiar, and which they needed to assuage the homesickness that almost every colonist carries with him to the end. Just because they sought new worlds they did not necessarily seek a new way of life.

There is a simpler explanation than this of the conservatism of the colonist in the creating of his schools and other forms of social structure. It may be due in large part to sheer lack of imagination and to that inborn dislike of change that is found in all forms of human society. Yet one who knows colonial life

*FitzGerald, the Superintendent of Canterbury, could be quoted as an exception. Speaking on education at the first session of the Provincial Council, he said: 'It is your fortunate lot, Gentlemen, to enter upon this question uncumbered by such a conflict [as exists in the old country] between the ideas of the past and the necessities of the future. Whatever you recognise as theoretically right, it is in your power to carry into action.'
even in the second and third generations cannot but feel that there is more to it than this, that the mere passive dislike of change is not enough to explain the passionate intensity with which the colonist holds on to some of the forms and rituals of the old world, almost as if he were using them as a shield against the unknown. Whatever be the explanation, it cannot be gainsaid that the colonist has to face in a highly intensified form the problem that vexes all communities, the balancing of the traditional or historical principle against what one might loosely term the geographical principle of adaptation to changed, and changing, conditions of life.

These two principles find very different balances in different departments of colonial life. In the more immediately practical business of providing food, clothing, and shelter a fair degree of adaptation to local circumstances is necessary if life is to continue at all. The social and economic activities that are most closely tied up with the production of primary necessities will also depend in large part upon the geographical principle, but the form of social institutions, such as the education system, that are more remote from day-to-day necessities, may be determined almost entirely by the historical principle without involving any immediate breakdown of the social structure as a whole. The colonist-farmer who follows in the new land exactly the agricultural methods of the old will discover his mistake within a
season or two and will either take steps to adapt his methods to changed conditions or go bankrupt. As a farmer he must either adapt or die. So to a lesser degree must all the artisans, the builders of houses and roads, the makers of food and clothing. The cycle of activity is short, and failure shows quickly. With education it is very different: there is a time-lag of at least a generation, and even at the end of that time failure is not easily recognised, for the generation that must recognise it is itself the failure. So the education system can be one of the last parts of colonial life to adapt itself to the new land.

There is, of course, nothing new in this process of differential adaptation, which can be seen in any society. Its special significance in a colony follows from the fact that the change of physical environment is sudden instead of gradual, whilst the force of tradition may in some respects be strengthened by physical separation from the original model. The very desire to copy the homeland may cause the pioneer to lose effective touch with it, for he tends to ignore, even clamantly deny, the changes that have taken place since his departure. The homeland he copies may be the homeland of twenty years before, or even an idealised or never-existent land seen through the mist of the softening years. The workings of the geographical principle, especially through the growing efficiency of methods of communication, prevent this tendency from exercising its full effect, but twentieth-century
New Zealand still appreciably feels the pull of nineteenth-century England. Nowhere is this pull felt more strongly than in the education system.

Such is the thesis of this book: that the historical principle of maintaining cultural continuity played a greater part in forming the education system of New Zealand than did the geographical principle of adaptation to a new environment. It would be idle to press the matter further without examining the social and educational systems of the homeland from which the colonists came.

It is not without significance that the year 1839, which saw the departure of the first organised body of colonists for New Zealand, was also the year in which England set up its first government body for the control of education, the Committee of the Privy Council on Education which had the none-too-princely sum of £30,000 a year at its disposal for 'promoting public education'. Both events resulted from the same upsurging of popular feeling that was a feature of English social and political life in the period immediately following the Napoleonic wars.

The social and political patterns of the whole of Europe had been strained and torn by a series of notable occurrences. The French Revolution had shaken the simple faith in the aristocratic system that had been accepted by the common people of England
right into the eighteenth century. The Napoleonic wars, like all major conflicts, were followed by a period of economic distress and political questioning. If any aristocratic optimists had hopes of England returning to a placid pre-war normality they were counting without the Industrial Revolution which was steadily forcing wider the cleavages first shown by the French Revolution. The growth of the middle classes and the class of town labourers was creating new social problems that demanded immediate solution. The birth rate increased so rapidly that the population of England doubled itself in the first half of the century. The growing unemployment amongst male workers and the exploitation of women and children in mine and factory created strains that threatened to become intolerable. The accumulated tensions produced a social restlessness that found its expression on the one hand in the movement towards parliamentary and social reform at home, and on the other in the search for happier lands overseas where an individual’s abilities might find fuller scope.

It is essential to remember that it was for the individual that opportunities were wanted. Individualism of one kind or another was the predominant philosophy of the early nineteenth century. Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham had established to the general approval that the individual can and should pursue only his own happiness. The greatest good of the greatest number could be achieved only by
letting every man seek his own well-being to the fullest. The education systems of the twentieth century bear almost ineffaceably the impress of this nineteenth-century democratic individualism.

It is not easy to explain completely the growing faith in education, which had so little encouragement from official sources in England, during the first third of the nineteenth century. It owed much to that vague, self-conscious, but none the less real, philanthropy which moved men and women, themselves in comfortable circumstances, to strive to improve the conditions of the poor. Intellectual acceptance of the doctrine that self-interest is a duty did not altogether dry up the wells of human sympathy, and even Jeremy Bentham found it necessary to perform remarkable acrobatics of logic to reconcile the promptings of his heart and his head. The monitorial schools of Lancaster and Bell owed their beginnings in large part to pure philanthropy, as did the 'charity schools' of a century before and the Sunday schools that began in England towards the end of the eighteenth century. What Defoe called 'the great law of subordination' was, of course, taken for granted. Hannah More, a pioneer of the Sunday schools, faithfully reflected the prevailing temper when she indignantly denied that she was guilty of anything so subversive of the established social order as teaching the poor of Cheddar to write. To teach the children of the poor to read the Scriptures was to engage in a
useful, if not essential, form of charity; to give them ideas above their station in life was to fly in the face of Providence. It is impossible to understand English popular education until one realises that it began in this way as a charity provided by the well-to-do for the children of the deserving poor.

As the century progressed a more fundamental concept of education came slowly to the fore: an increasing number of men and women began to see it as a social necessity. Humanitarian labour laws were beginning to exclude children from mine and factory, and the streets of the growing industrial cities were providing a type of education calculated to produce a nation of pickpockets. Somehow occupation and discipline had to be found for children to keep them off the streets, and the monitory schools, themselves modelled on the factory, served the purpose cheaply if not well. The belief in education as a social necessity went yet deeper, and slowly the realisation developed that, in a changed world, society as a whole could be only unstably balanced on the foundation of an ignorant proletariat. It was not just as children that the working classes needed the discipline of education. The nineteenth century developed a sense of ignorance as earlier centuries had developed a sense of sin, and education began, though amongst only a small group at first, to be thought of as a panacea for all social ills.

The philosophies of Bentham and the early laissez faire economists had something to do with this new
faith in education. They taught that all would be well in society if every man were free to act according to the demands of his own 'enlightened self-interest'. The more idealistic members of this school of thought laid increasing emphasis on the element of enlightenment in their formula. If only, they felt, the working man could be given sufficient education to enable him to understand the simple principles on which society is based he must realise their inherent justice and inevitability, and social unrest must disappear. No man, presumably, could be so unreasonable as to object to working long hours for starvation rates of pay if he understood that it was due not to the malice or indifference of the upper classes but to the operation of economic laws as natural and inflexible as the law of gravity.

Education thus tended to be thought of, in effect, as an insurance against civil disorder and as a means of providing a supply of docile and reasonably efficient labour. There seems to have been no idea amongst the ruling classes that this new popular education should enable the poor to climb above the station in which it had pleased God to place them. The class stratification of English society was taken for granted, and the elementary school system was to have no organic relation with the 'public' schools. The education given there was never conceived as a preparation for the kind of education already being received by the upper classes. It was becoming
increasingly necessary for the comfort and safety of all concerned that the children of the ‘independent poor’ (a significant term) should be raised to the level of bare literacy: few, if any, contemplated taking them far beyond that level. It is easy to understand the suspicion of the working men of Burnley who in 1847 issued a manifesto declaring that the education provided for their class was so designed that ‘it may be engrafted into the minds of your children, that they will always be passive slaves and obedient to the powers that be.’

It is a curious fact that, in spite of the growing conviction that education for all was a social necessity, the State in England took no direct part in providing for it until 1833, and then only to the extent of a grant of £20,000 a year ‘in aid of private subscriptions for the erection of school-houses for the education of the poorer classes in Great Britain.’ In the same year France passed a law decreeing the placing of a school in every French community, and Prussia had by then long had a system of universal state education. England, however, persisted in officially regarding education as a form of church or private charity even when the State began to provide quite substantial sums towards the upkeep of the schools. By 1858 the annual parliamentary grant for education was £663,000, having increased fourfold since 1852, but the State conducted no schools of its own, and nearly half the children belonged to what Matthew Arnold
called the ‘schoolless multitude’. Of those who did attend, over two-thirds left school with very meagre attainments before the age of eleven. Attendance was grossly irregular.

It was obviously not the efficiency of the church system of schools that endeared it to the legislators, but rather the complexity of the sectarian problems that deterred them from creating the state school system that the country so evidently needed. Yet the minority of the Newcastle Commission in 1861 could still plead that the education of the independent poor be left to ‘private duty and benevolence’ and it was not until Forster’s Education Act of 1870 that England finally admitted education to be a legitimate state service. Only in 1881 did school attendance in England become compulsory.

The gradual change-over from the conception of education as a private or semi-private charity to the conception of it as a social necessity has been treated rather fully because the first colonisation of New Zealand took place right in the middle of the transition. Public opinion in England had by no means accepted the idea of education as a corporate responsibility by the time the colonists left, but there was a small minority working steadily towards the idea, and this minority found some representation in the new colony.

An organisation that seems to have had a considerable effect on education in New Zealand was the
British and Foreign School Society,* founded in 1809 by Joseph Lancaster, co-inventor with Bell of the famous monitory system, who advertised himself as ‘having invented under the blessing of Divine Providence a new and mechanical system for the use of schools.’ Lancaster was convinced that education ‘ought to become a national concern’, and in spite of his claim to divine assistance he was strongly opposed to sectarianism in the schools because it rendered almost impossible the creation of a national system of education. He was, however, far from advocating a purely secular education. The Scriptures were his texts and he based all his teaching on ‘general Christian principles’ rather than on the dogmas of any sect.

One suspects, with, it must be admitted, little evidence, that if Lancaster had lived in the twentieth century he might have been an out-and-out secularist, but that was unthinkable in even a radical school-master a hundred years ago. As it was, Mrs Trimmer, a well-known writer on the religious instruction of children, condemned Lancaster as ‘the Goliath of Schismatics’, and prevailed on Bell to found, under the auspices of the Church, the National School Society which organised monitory schools ready and able to impart the particular Christian principles of the Church of England. The quarrel between the National Society and the British and Foreign Society

*The name dates from 1814, but the Royal Lancastrian School Society was founded in 1809.
assumed considerable proportions and became the quarrel between Church and Dissent. Since the early colonists of New Zealand included more than a due proportion of dissenters, it is not perhaps quite an accident that one of the first two schools in Nelson was started by a branch of the British and Foreign School Society, a fact that inclined Nelson always to remain the stronghold of non-sectarian education.

Apart from questions of religious doctrine the schools of both societies were in agreement as to the proper curriculum and pedagogical methods for the children of the lower classes. The Scriptures and the three Rs were the staple intellectual fare, and the methods of the monitory schools were devised to give at a minimum cost constant drill in reading, writing, and simple number. At the beginning of an era of mass-production, large classes and underpaid and untrained teachers were taken for granted. This is significant in the understanding of later developments in both England and New Zealand.

It must not be assumed that, even in this humble and economical form, popular education was universally accepted as an ideal. The reformers wanted to save souls through the reading of the Scriptures, and the industrialists wanted docile and efficient labour, but the attitude of a not inconsiderable portion of the aristocratic ruling class was expressed in the House of Commons by an opponent of the Parish Schools Bill of 1807 when he said, 'Learning will point out
to the poor enjoyments which Providence hath wisely and tenderly concealed.' For this class the only educa-
tion worthy of the name was given in the great public
schools which, though they had fallen very low in
the eighteenth century, experienced a remarkable
revival in the first half of the nineteenth, thanks
largely to the work of Samuel Butler at Shrewsbury
and Arnold at Rugby. Latin and Greek were the
basis of the whole curriculum. Indeed in 1805 the
Court of Chancery ruled that to use grammar school
funds for the teaching of anything but 'the learned
languages' would amount to misappropriation. Some
mathematics, history, and geography crept into the
curriculum, but the gulf between the classical educa-
tion of the gentleman and the strictly utilitarian
education of the labourer remained so great that no
one ever thought the co-ordination of the two was
necessary or even possible. New Zealand has made the
boldest attempt in the British Empire to bridge this
gulf, and in doing so has found herself faced with
novel problems, not all of which are yet completely
solved.

No account of the roots from which the New
Zealand education system grew would be complete
without some mention of the Scottish school system,
although it was not until the seventies and later that
the Scottish tradition began to exercise its influence
very strongly throughout the whole of New Zealand.
The Scottish conception of an education system was
quite different from the English. As far back as the twelfth century parish schools began to be founded in the villages of Scotland, and a series of acts in the seventeenth century provided for the maintenance at public expense of a school in every parish. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the parish school system was widespread. Although small fees were charged, the system was, for the period, extremely democratic, and children of every social grade could meet on terms of equality on the benches of the parish school. These schools provided not only elementary education but also, in many cases, higher education up to university entrance level. The Scots had a traditional belief in higher education for its own sake, and solved the problems arising from scattered villages and bad communications by developing secondary ‘tops’ to their small elementary schools. Many years later the settlers of Otago were to offer to New Zealand the same solution to the same problem.

Secondary education was also provided by the burgh schools, many of them of ancient lineage, which were under the management of the town councils, although the Church retained some measure of superintendence over them until 1861. They also charged fees, but they were in no sense the preserve of the middle and upper classes as in England. There was provision for the ‘lad o’ pairts’ of the working class, if his parents were prepared to make the necessary sacrifices, to pass through the burgh school
and on to the university. The secondary school system lay end-on to the elementary schools: any tendency to make it a parallel system providing a different kind of schooling for a different type of child has always been strenuously opposed in Scotland. Such was the type of school system that Captain Cargill and his fellow-immigrants had as their pattern when they landed in Otago. Compared with English practice it was democratic in the extreme, and New Zealand has drawn freely on Scottish experience in evolving her own democratic school system. Yet, curiously enough, it is just this typically Scottish tradition of democratic secondary education that is the greatest obstacle to establishing a system that would be regarded as democratic in New Zealand at the beginning of her second century. For the Scottish secondary schools were essentially selective: it was to the ‘lad o’ pairs’ that their attentions were given, and the child of even mediocre ability had to get along as best he could, on a curriculum devised for the really able, and consisting almost entirely of classics and mathematics. The academic tradition is deep-seated in the Scottish system, and it was not until well on in the second half of the nineteenth century that even English was taught with any seriousness in many of the burgh schools. The narrow range of subjects was taught with admirable thoroughness, but the modern conception of a differentiated curriculum catering for every type and level of
intellect was even more foreign to the Scottish tradition than it was to the English. For the birth of that conception we have in the main to thank the United States of America.

This was, in brief, the educational background of the early settlers in New Zealand. Before we can trace the development of these educational ideas in the new colony, it is necessary to know how far the colonists themselves could be said to represent the different strata of British social life. Edward Gibbon Wakefield laid it down as one of the fundamental principles of his scheme of colonisation that 'emigrants should not be convicts but judiciously selected young free settlers in equal proportion of the sexes, and a vertical section or slice of English society from highest to lowest.' It is hard to see how anyone could seriously have expected to set up such a complete cross-section in a colony that had, after all, very little to offer to the more prosperous members of either the upper or the middle classes. A few adventurous and restless souls might come from any class attracted by the very things that would deter the majority of their social peers; a handful of educated idealists, eager to try out theories in a land unhampered, as they thought, by outgrown traditions, might be tempted to emigrate; but there is no conceivable reason why the bulk of well-settled nobility or prosperous merchants and
manufacturers should have felt any desire to leave a land where they were successful for a distant colony that could offer them only the novel possibility of failure.

In actual fact the Wakefield colonists were far from being a faithful representation of the English social hierarchy. There were men with noble and distinguished names amongst the organisers of the New Zealand Company, but they were interested in encouraging others to emigrate and, for the most part, had no intention of ever seeing the colony themselves. A few younger sons of what would have been called 'good' families certainly did come out to New Zealand anxious either to multiply rapidly their all-too-small patrimonies or to find an independence and distinction which their unfortunate position in the family denied them in Britain. Many of them were men of university training and members of one or other of the learned professions, and their education and general background enabled them to play a part in the life of the young colony out of all proportion to their numbers or even to the capital at their command.

The majority of the land purchasers were not men of large capital. Nelson provides a somewhat extreme example. William Fox, when defending in 1849 the Company’s action in sending such a surplus of labour to the settlement that many labourers were brought to the verge of starvation, complained that 'it would not have been unreasonable to expect that the resi-
dent land-purchasers would possess an average capital of £1,000 apiece. Their number was above seventy [actually there were 315 buyers of the 442 Nelson properties, but the great majority of these were absentee owners], which would have given a fund for the immediate employment of labour of £70,000. It is a fact, however, that no such amount of capital was in the hands of the landowners. Instead of there being an average of £1,000 apiece, that sum seems to have been nearer the maximum, with at most one or two exceptions; while well-authenticated instances have been mentioned of the owners of whole allotments of 201 acres arriving in the Colony with less than £100 of capital, and that in the case of parties unacquainted with agricultural pursuits, and unaccustomed, and unfit by previous habits, to put their own hand to the plough or spade.

It is impossible to generalise on the motives that drove such men to emigrate. ‘Kappa’ (John Ward), writing in 1842, more than hints that it was the desire to get out of England rather than the desire to come to New Zealand that provided the driving force: ‘Surely when we consider the growing necessities of the middle classes in Great Britain and the desire rapidly springing up to escape from them, it may very fairly be calculated that a constant supply of purchasers will be found who can command £300 and enough more gradually to bring the land into cultivation.’ Certain it is that for the majority there
was no Utopian idea of founding a classless state: as far as the structure of society was concerned, the new colony should be forever England. 'Kappa' is explicit on the point: 'The number and respectability of the settlers gone out, now going and preparing to go in the course of a year or two,—the amount of capital subscribed . . . all combine to secure the progress of this settlement [Nelson] in the national order of society as it is found in England—composed of a graduation of classes, with full security for the rights and privileges of each. And this order is more likely to exist where property is kept together in a moderate state of division, rather than frittered away into minute subdivisions.'*

The Wakefield scheme of land purchase achieved, if it did not exactly aim at, the maintenance of class distinctions. The idea was to purchase land as cheaply as possible from the Maoris and then sell it at a high price, ranging from £1 to £3 an acre in the different settlements, so that the labourer should not be able, without working for many years for wages, to become himself a landowner. Part of the purchase money was to be devoted to paying the fares of the purchaser and his family to New Zealand, and the residue was to be used to give free steerage passages to male labourers and artisans and female dress-makers, seamstresses, and domestic servants. A steady supply of cheap and willing labour was thus to be

ensured, and the New Zealand landowner was to be spared the unhappy experience of some Australian ‘squatters’ who had imported labourers only to find that they were more interested in taking up cheap land themselves than in working for low wages.

Anyone who knows the distressing conditions of the agricultural labourers and many of the town workers in Britain in the ‘hungry forties’ of last century would not think of looking further for the motives of the working class immigrants in coming to New Zealand. At the same time, it was probably the more enterprising of the artisans and labourers who made the venture, and the New Zealand Company did make some effort to secure workers who had not been a charge upon the parish, so that the poorest of the poor did not generally find their way out to New Zealand. There seems to have been little difficulty in securing sufficient working class immigrants and the appalling conditions in some of the settlements in the early years were due to the Company’s having brought out far more workers than the existing capital could provide with employment.

Summarising, one might say that although the English social spectrum was very much contracted in New Zealand there was not a corresponding lessening of the social distinctions made. The land purchasers tended for some time to remain a class apart and the working classes accepted the orthodox social divisions even though as individuals they saw,
after the hard times of the earliest years, some chance of bettering their own positions. There was no proletariat in the modern sense, no organised self-conscious working class, but rather, to use again the modern jargon, a petty bourgeoisie whose members were primarily interested in 'getting on' within the accepted social structure. We shall see what profound effects this attitude of mind has had upon the education system of New Zealand.
HISTORICAL INFLUENCES combined with geographical to give New Zealand in the early days a system of educational administration that was local rather than national in structure. So poor were means of communication between the different settlements—their quickest contacts were often through Sydney—that they were in many respects separate colonies. It was inevitable that a social function so personal and intimate as education should be carried on by local organisations rather than by the central government, especially as there was little precedent in either English or Scottish experience for governmental responsibility for schooling.

Knowing the traditions of the colonists and the kind of country they were entering, an intelligent English observer at the beginning of last century could have predicted with tolerable certainty that New Zealand would begin with a decentralised education system: he could not perhaps have foretold that, when communications improved and the historical
principle was no longer reinforced by the geographical, there would be a strong swing away from the precedents of the homeland towards centralisation of control. He would also have expected the churches to play the dominant role in the schooling of the young colony, but he would probably have been shocked had he been permitted to foresee that the secularisation of the system would proceed so rapidly that before the end of the century it should be one of the country’s proudest boasts that its schools were free, secular, and compulsory. The history of educational administration in New Zealand can best be followed in terms of the double movement from local to central control and from church dominance to complete secularism. Although both movements were in the early stages intertwined, it is convenient to approach them first from the point of view of the steady trend towards secularism.

(Before 1840 whatever formal education existed in New Zealand was entirely in the hands of the church. Samuel Marsden opened the first mission school for Maoris at the Bay of Islands in 1816, and before 1840 the Wesleyans and the Catholics were also in the field. After the arrival of the organised colonists, however, New Zealand education was at no time so completely church-dominated as were the English and Scottish systems. By 1840 sectarian quarrels over education in England had generated sufficient bitterness to make some of the settlers wary of deliberately introducing
the problems of the old world into the new. The better-informed of them were also aware of the political upheavals and religious dissension that had resulted from the British Government’s policy of establishing the Church of England in Canada, New South Wales, and South Africa and of setting aside in these colonies huge land reserves for the main if not the exclusive benefit of this one denomination. Wakefield certainly was in an excellent position to know the damage that could be wrought by such reserves in a community of mixed religions, for he had been associated with Lord Durham’s investigation of the Canadian grievances. Moreover, the British Government itself was by this time convinced of the unwisdom of its former policy. Not wishing to burn its fingers once again, it refrained from establishing the Church of England in New Zealand, which meant that from the foundation of the colony all sects were on an equal footing before the law. This made the task of creating a church system of schools extremely difficult, especially in sparsely populated settlements in which several denominations were represented, and favoured the movement towards secular control. To the Colonial Office, however, the absence of an established church implied merely that each of the various denominations should receive its fair share of any grants made by the legislature for educational purposes. There was no suggestion that the State, central or local, should turn schoolmaster. On the
contrary, it was assumed that its activity in education would, as in England, be limited to encouraging and assisting the work of the churches. Governor Hobson received instructions to this effect from the Colonial Office, and they were put into operation by Governor Grey, who was himself strongly opposed to secular control of schools, in his Education Ordinance of 1847, the first educational legislation in the colony.

Grey's ordinance immediately led to trouble. It provided for annual state grants to schools run by the Anglican, Wesleyan, and Roman Catholic Churches. The result was a wasteful overlapping of effort and a growing resentment on the part of the denominations that had not been early enough in the field to share in the benefits under the ordinance, and also on the part of secular school organisations (such as already existed in Nelson) which were denied any form of state assistance. So strongly did feeling run against denominationalism in some parts of the country that in 1848 the Legislative Council of New Munster, led by Alfred Domett, which was already at loggerheads with Grey over the constitutional question, simply refused to put the ordinance into operation. In the end the Maoris of the Auckland province were the chief beneficiaries under the ordinance, but subsidies were given as well to the pakeha denominational schools of Auckland. One effect was to confirm the whole Auckland province in the preference for denominational schooling which it had already
acquired from its contacts with the mission schools and from the thoroughly English outlook of Grey.

Wellington, the first of the New Zealand Company's settlements, did not follow in Auckland's footsteps. One can only hazard a guess as to why Wakefield's plan for the Wellington settlement contained no provision for education, either denominational or secular. On the one hand Wakefield was aware of the troubles that would follow the setting aside of church reserves for education in a community of mixed denominations; on the other, he must have known that any scheme for purely secular schooling directly controlled by the State would find little favour with his upper-class English backers who could find no precedent for such a system in their own experience. It may be that he found it convenient in the circumstances to overlook the necessity for educational provision until his settlement should be safely launched. The most important of his Wellington settlers, the 'capitalists', would not be unduly worried by the absence of any public scheme of education, since they would in any case expect their children to attend exclusive fee-paying schools. So it came about that Wellington, with no educational reserves, no state assistance for denominational schools, and no friendly contacts with the mission schools, developed a collection—it would be misleading to call it a system—of private schools catering for those able to pay fees.
By the time Nelson was settled in 1842 the New Zealand Company had decided to incorporate provision for some measure of public education in its plan of colonisation. One of the conditions governing the sale of land in Nelson was that, out of the sum of £50,000 to be devoted to public purposes, £15,000 was to be applied to the establishment of a college. Owing to the failure of the Company, however, the money was not available until 1857, though Nelson College was actually opened in 1856 'for the advancement of religion and morality, and the promoting of useful knowledge, by offering to the youth of the province a general education of a superior character'. In the meantime the settlers were left to shift for themselves in the provision of education for their children, and to men born in easier times it must remain ever a cause of wonderment that the Nelson colonists, dispirited by their failure to secure land or employment, frightened by the Wairau massacre, and faced with starvation, could yet, without any assistance from outside, found and carry on during their blackest days a little school system that was ultimately to become an inspiration to the whole of New Zealand.

Nelson, like Wellington, was settled mostly by English colonists, but the social composition of the settlement was rather different from that of Wellington and markedly different from that of Auckland. There was a relatively high proportion of labourers
and working men, and few settlers with more than a very modest capital. Most of the major religious denominations were represented, and the non-conformists were relatively more numerous than in the other two settlements. Since land was almost unprocurable at first, and production was consequently delayed, there was little money to spare, certainly not enough for each of the sects to set up its own school system. The situation obviously called for some kind of joint action on a non-sectarian basis. The British and Foreign School Society, which some of the nonconformists must have known in England, provided a ready-made model.

Actually, however, the first school to be started in Nelson did not claim affiliation to the British and Foreign School Society, although its principles were very similar to those of the Society. It was greatly influenced by the English Sunday school. On 27 March 1842, 'in a rush-woven cottage on the banks of the Maitai assembled a few labourers and mechanics, who saw the necessity of making some effort to instruct their children at least one day in seven. . . . Taking the circuit of the scattered and half-impene-trable plain . . . they endeavoured to collect nearly the whole of the children of the early colonists, and to impart to them such humble information as they themselves possessed.'*At first it was only a Sunday school that was run by the Nelson School Society.

‘It was a pleasant sight, on a Sabbath morn, to see the well-attired little parties issuing from the groups of huts, and passing along the narrow avenues, formed by the tall fern, to the place in which they were reminded of the religion of their fathers in a country new and strange, and taught from the Bible on the open principles of our Society, which has the Bible for its basis, being free from all denominational objections, striving at the inculcation of the essence of Christianity, the simple lessons of the Saviour, which lessons in their own language, we hold sufficient to improve the heart and prepare us for the state of future happiness.’

This Sunday school later developed into a day school, but in the meantime another school had been started by what was in effect a branch of the British and Foreign School Society under the leadership of the Quaker surveyor, Frederick Tuckett. Alfred Domett and Captain Wakefield were honorary inspectors. In 1845 this movement was merged into the Nelson School Society which, led by Matthew Campbell, established other schools throughout the province. The Society depended for its finances almost entirely on subscriptions and donations. Fees were charged, but the scale was so low that they brought in very little money. The Committee resolved in 1846 that fees ‘be threepence per week when ciphering is taught; twopence when only reading and writing are taught, provided nevertheless that not more than
sixpence per week be received from any family; provided also that any member of the committee have power to furnish tickets for the free admission of any child, in cases of family distress, sickness, etc. . . . ' The fees for the first three months of 1847 amounted to only £2 4s 3d. In 1848 Grey made the Society a grant of £35 a year, and between 1854 and 1857 the provincial government gave a few hundred pounds, but, as might be expected, the Society was usually in debt.

One of the first acts of the Nelson Provincial Council after its establishment in 1854 was to set up a commission to report on education. The Education Ordinance of 1856, based on the commission's report, provided for a central board of education elected by local committees to be set up in school districts. There was to be a school rate of £1 a year on every householder, and a special rate of 5s a year for each child between the ages of five and fourteen years. The Provincial Council was also to make grants for education. One of the commission's most important resolutions, which was incorporated in the ordinance, was to the effect 'that religious instruction, when given, shall be free from all controversial character, and imparted at such hours that parents objecting may be able to withdraw their children from the school at the time it is given.' There was much opposition to the ordinance, especially from the Catholics, and in 1858 an amendment permitted
denominational schools to receive assistance from the Board of Education provided that they were open to all children and that any religious instruction should be given at such times that children could stay away from it. The Board of Education took over the Society’s schools, and continued to run them with considerable success and relatively little friction until the passing of the provinces in 1876. This achievement made a marked impression in other provinces, several of which borrowed much of their legislation from the ordinance of 1856. The influence of Nelson in hastening the movement towards universal public education was out of all proportion to the size and wealth of the province.

Otago and Canterbury, founded respectively in 1848 and 1850, were settled under religious auspices, the former Presbyterian, the latter Anglican, and in both provision was made for large endowments for religious and educational purposes. In promoting these schemes Wakefield and his fellow directors of the Company doubtless argued that in colonies made up exclusively of settlers of one faith the ‘religious difficulty’ would not arise. Actually neither settlement was at any stage completely homogeneous in its religion and for this reason (to which, with Canterbury, must be added clerical mismanagement of school funds) neither escaped acrimonious controversy over the control of education.

The Scottish Presbyterians who emigrated to Otago
were for the most part agricultural labourers and artisans, devout, hard-working folk with an immense respect for the Kirk and for learning. They were accompanied by their ministers and schoolmasters—the first official schoolmaster to the settlement conducted classes on the voyage out, giving instruction ‘every week day excepting Saturday, without intermission while the emigrants remained aboard’—and the ambition of their leaders was to create a community ‘constituted similar to a parish or county in Scotland’. As a result of close co-operation between the Presbytery and the secular authorities this ambition was, on its educational side, realised to a remarkable degree. By the end of the provincial period in 1876 there had been built up in Otago a well-organised system of primary, post-primary, and higher education which did, indeed, finally make concessions to the large and growing non-Presbyterian element in the province, but which bore a strong family likeness to the original Scottish model.

By the agreement between the Otago Association and the Company one-eighth of the proceeds of land sales was to be set aside, under the control of trustees for the Presbyterian Church of Otago, for ‘religious and educational purposes’. This money, however, was used to purchase land as a permanent church endowment and none of it was made available for ‘educational purposes’. Hence the settlers were at first thrown on

*Later the Church endowed chairs in the University of Otago.
their own resources, and in 1850 it was decided to raise money by public subscription and to establish a primary school in each district. A few years later education became the responsibility of the provincial government, and after the passing of the ‘McGlashan’ Ordinance in 1856, which provided for the establishment of public schools under the control of an education board and local committees, the schools were maintained out of provincial revenues and pupils’ fees. Hereafter the story of education in Otago is one of steady and uninterrupted expansion, and by 1876 it had, in addition to its primary system, boys’ and girls’ high schools at Dunedin, five country grammar or district high schools, a teachers’ training college and normal school, and a university—the only fully-developed system of post-primary and higher education in the colony. Nowhere else in New Zealand, furthermore, were there better-built or better-equipped schools, better-qualified or better-paid teachers—or more vigilant and exacting inspectors. Nevertheless education was far from being universal—in this respect Nelson had a much better record—and the authorities were not in favour of making it compulsory. Compulsion implied free education, and Otago, with its Calvinistic horror of making things easy, adhered very rigidly to the principle of school fees. The result was that children of parents who were unwilling or unable to pay fees were deprived of any schooling at all.
Despite the fact that no funds were available for public education from its endowments, the Presbyterian Church maintained for many years a powerful grip on the schools. Under the McGlashan Ordinance religious instruction was part of the ordinary curriculum, and although the framers of the bill failed in their attempt to prescribe the Shorter Catechism, they secured the passage of clauses that went a long way towards ensuring that none but impeccable Presbyterian doctrine was taught. No teacher could be appointed unless he could produce a certificate from his minister guaranteeing his fitness to give religious instruction, and as a further safeguard, it was laid down that any two male parents might challenge the soundness of his doctrine before the school committee and the board, after which, if the charge were proved, he might be censured, suspended, or dismissed. In these circumstances there was plainly not the slightest reason why the Church should put itself to the trouble and expense of creating its own system of denominational schools.

With the inrush of miners that took place in the early sixties, however, the non-Presbyterian population of the province grew so rapidly that its dissatisfaction with a system that permitted the teaching of what it regarded as sectarian doctrine at the public expense could no longer be ignored. The Kirk and its supporters had gradually to give way, and there was a steady movement towards complete secularism. The
official religious instruction had by 1872 given place to daily Bible reading, without note or comment, at the opening or close of school. To the Roman Catholic Church, however, and to a section of Anglican opinion, the new situation was no better than the old, and they continued to press a long-standing demand for grants for their own denominational schools. But on this matter Otago was not to be moved — it feared disruption of its cherished system of schools and it feared priestcraft—and whenever the issue arose in the national Parliament there was fierce opposition from Otago representatives to any scheme for denominational grants.

Canterbury was to be a segment of English society, composed entirely of members of the Anglican Church, with a cathedral city that would spread its civilising influence throughout the whole province, and a rural land-owning aristocracy cultivating its estates with the help of an adequate supply of labourers. ‘Without a certain provision for religion and education,’ stated the directors of the Canterbury Association (of which the Archbishop of Canterbury himself was chairman), ‘the gentry of England, who are religious and educated men, cannot be expected to emigrate.’ It was actually decided that as much as one-third of the proceeds of land sales should be set aside for religion and education; and ample provision was made for clergymen (at £200 a year) and schoolmasters (at £70). ‘At the head of the educational
system,' wrote Alston to Godley, 'which was to be under the control of the Church, there was to be a College capable of taking rank with similar institutions [in England], from which, as from a central point, the education, not merely of the Canterbury settlement, nor of New Zealand alone, but of the Australian Colonies, even of India itself, may in a measure be supplied.'

But as men like Godley and FitzGerald quickly realised, good churchmen though they were, colonial conditions were destined sooner or later to defeat any attempt to make the province a Church of England preserve. Godley himself made the task more difficult by permitting Australian squatters who were not adherents of the Church to buy runs on the same terms as the other settlers, while FitzGerald, far from claiming special educational privileges for his Church, opposed denominational control altogether and fought for a system of public schools. After the provincial government was set up the combined influence of a section of the Anglican laity, the wealthy runholders from Australia, and the growing nonconformist middle class was strong enough to establish the principle that all denominations were entitled to a fair share of grants for education. It was much the same alliance that was ultimately responsible for the complete overthrow of denominationalism and the establishment in Canterbury of a system so entirely secular that its opponents could call it 'godless'.
In Canterbury, as in Otago, the settlers had at first to provide schools for themselves, as no money was available for either churches or schools from the province's very handsome endowment, although there were building sites in abundance. This curious state of affairs resulted from the action of the Canterbury Association in paying over to itself the one-third of the proceeds of land sales which it then re-invested in unsold land of its own as an endowment for the objects of the trust, an expedient adopted by the Association in 1853 in order to provide itself with ready money. Instead of witnessing the orderly development of the education system planned by the founders of the Association, the early years of the settlement saw nothing more than the establishment of the Canterbury College and Grammar School (in practice it was a grammar school only), and the haphazard growth of a collection of private and denominational schools which was quite inadequate to meet the educational needs of the community. FitzGerald pleaded with the Provincial Council to take the situation thoroughly in hand, but it declined to do so, and followed the policy of making relatively small grants to the Bishop of Christchurch and the heads of the Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches, and leaving them entirely free to organise and control education in their own way.

The system, FitzGerald said, was the very worst that could be adopted, and as many of his fellow-
citizens shared his dissatisfaction, the Provincial Council finally decided to set up a commission of enquiry which reported in 1863. FitzGerald and his supporters were fully vindicated. Some areas had no educational facilities, in others there was wasteful overlapping, and many of the schools themselves were insanitary, overcrowded, and grossly inefficient. ‘The practical result’, said the commissioners, ‘has been not only the creation of an authority independent of the Legislature, but also of one incapable in its very organisation of acting harmoniously within itself.’

As a result of the commission’s report the administration of educational funds was immediately transferred from the denominational heads to a public board of education. But the system did not at once become entirely secular. An ordinance of 1864 provided for both public and denominational schools. In the former there was Scripture reading, and the teacher might, subject to a unanimous vote of the committee, give religious instruction as well; in addition the clergy had the right of entry for the purpose of giving distinctive religious teaching to the children of their own communion. In the denominational schools the committees were free to make their own arrangements. With this compromise none of the contending parties was completely satisfied, and, after some preliminary skirmishes, matters came to an issue in 1873, when an intense and bitter struggle took place. The secularists, who were able
to point to the advances being made under a system of public control, had in the meantime greatly strengthened their position and they won a decisive victory. All grants to denominational schools were stopped, and religious instruction by the teachers, which had two years earlier been reduced to simple Scripture reading, was eliminated entirely. The only remnant of denominationalism that remained was 'the right of entry' of the clergy and it was saved by the narrowest of majorities. That Canterbury of all provinces should go so far is still something of a puzzle; one can only assume that a considerable number of Anglicans were completely out of sympathy with the policy of their Church.

During the last years of the provincial period the education system of Canterbury began to rival that of Otago, from which, indeed, much of its educational legislation had been borrowed. Provision for post-primary and higher education was not nearly as extensive as in Otago, but on the other hand primary education of much the same standard of efficiency was more widely diffused. Educational enthusiasts in less fortunate provinces looked with envy at the Otago and Canterbury systems and when the time came to organise a national system it was natural that the government should not only regard them in some degree as models, but should also appoint as administrators men who had been closely connected with them. The secretary of the Otago Board, John
Hislop, became the first secretary of the national Education Department, and the Rev. W. J. Habens, the secretary of the Canterbury Education Department (as it was called after 1875) its first Inspector-General. It was also natural that Otago and Canterbury should feel that they themselves had little to gain and possibly something to lose through the introduction of a national system, and that even those of their representatives whose vision was broad enough to compass the whole colony should yet be anxious to preserve a large measure of provincial autonomy in educational affairs.

About the beginning of the seventies the provincial governments of both Auckland and Wellington set themselves seriously to the task of building up public school systems (though as late as 1872 neither the city of Auckland nor the city of Wellington possessed a single common school). Auckland broke with denominationalism—for much the same reasons as Canterbury—and passed in 1869 a Common Schools Act that was based on the educational legislation of Nelson and Otago but went to the point of complete secularism, permitting no Scripture reading or religious instruction whatsoever. Wellington, which had always been unsympathetic to denominationalism and already possessed an ineffective Common Schools Act, remodelled its legislation on the lines of Nelson, though its education board, unlike that of Nelson, declined to give grants to church schools.
Thus in all five of the major provinces it had by the end of the provincial period come to be widely accepted that the chief responsibility for education lay, not with the churches or other voluntary organisations, but with the State. More than this, the four larger provinces (and Nelson is only a partial exception) had established the principle that public money granted for education should be devoted entirely to publicly-controlled schools in which religious teaching was either forbidden altogether or strictly limited to the reading of the Scriptures or to ‘non-sectarian’ instruction. At bottom it was a case of similar conditions producing similar results: in a colony of small and often struggling communities in which several sects were represented, each of equal standing before the law, and each ambitious to extend its influence, complete secularism—or a close approximation to it—was the price that had to be paid for economical and efficient organisation of schooling and a semblance of educational peace.

Although it was strengthened by the events leading up to the passage of the English Elementary Education Act of 1870, the demand for some measure of central control of education arose, not out of any theory about the part the general government should play in educational affairs, but out of the manifest failure of the provincial system to meet the minimum
educational needs of the colony. As late as 1870 not more than half the children between the ages of five and fifteen were going to school at all, and the proportion who were receiving regularly even moderately efficient instruction was very much smaller. Nelson, Otago, and Canterbury were far ahead of the other provinces; in 1869 their governments spent on the average £2 10s for every child of school age as against an average of only 5s in the rest of the colony. It was said that compared with the South the whole of the North Island was an intellectual desert. The main reason for the difference was economic. Canterbury and Otago were the wealthy provinces, with well-filled treasuries and substantial church endowments, whereas in the North Island, which had been harassed and impoverished by the Maori wars, the provincial governments were in acute financial difficulties.

Parliament agreed that some action should be taken, and in 1871 a bill was introduced by Fox, the Prime Minister. In the previous year Fox had declared that it was a matter for serious consideration ‘whether those provinces, which, from one cause or another have neglected the education of their people, are to throw upon the colony an uneducated population, to become a dangerous element in the community’; and the intention of his bill was not so much to supersede provincial control as to establish a general minimum standard. The debates that followed
revealed sharp and apparently irreconcilable differences of opinion both on the religious issue and on the question of the division of powers between the central government and the local authorities, and the measure was allowed to drop. A less ambitious measure was introduced by Vogel in 1873, and met the same fate. Three years later the Abolition of the Provinces Act came into operation. The provincial governments were no more, new arrangements had to be made for the provision and control of education, and there was at last a really favourable opportunity for the creation of a national system of schools.

Atkinson, the Prime Minister, allowed Charles Bowen, his Minister of Justice, to bring forward an education bill, which became in an amended form the Education Act of 1877, the measure that gave New Zealand her national system of free, secular, and compulsory primary education. Bowen, who had been closely associated with education in Canterbury, was convinced of three things: that it was the duty of the central government to see to it that ‘the key of knowledge . . . was put within the reach of every child in New Zealand’; that the actual control of education should be very definitely decentralised; and that, regrettable though it was, any arrangement that gave the churches a share in the control of schools provided by public money was likely to lead to friction and hinder progress. These were the main principles he tried to embody in the bill.
The bill provided for an education department, under a Minister of Education, which would pay annually to each of twelve education boards £3 10s in respect of every child in its schools, less any amounts the board might receive from endowments. Bowen's intention was to limit the other functions of the department (one of the most important of which was to be the control of a national inspectorate) to the minimum that was necessary to ensure that a reasonable standard of education was established and maintained throughout the colony. 'The expenditure on the central department', he said, 'will be very small, because a secretary and a clerk will probably do all the work ... for some time to come.' The local boards were to be the real administrators, and within the necessary framework of national organisation, there was to be ample room for them to determine their own policies and meet the educational needs of their districts in their own way; they were, in fact, to be the old provincial boards in a slightly different form and with but slightly diminished functions. If the boards were to be subject to pressure, it was to come, not from the centre, but from the periphery, from the school committees to be elected by ballots of householders in the small areas served by a single school, or a group of schools. The committees were to elect the boards (and thus, Bowen hoped, to control their policies) and they were to exercise important powers
on their own account, nothing less than 'the general management of educational matters within the school district', which included the right to recommend to the boards the appointment and dismissal of teachers, and to decide whether or not the compulsory attendance clauses were to be enforced. They were even to be empowered to collect a capitation tax from the householders of their districts, Bowen's object being to stimulate local interest in education and to strengthen their position as against the boards by giving them an independent source of revenue. In education, if not in other matters, there was to be no departure from the English tradition of local government; on the contrary the bill was expressly designed to give New Zealand the most decentralised system in the British Empire. There was no provision for the payment of grants to schools maintained by the churches or other voluntary organisations; and the teaching was to be of 'an entirely secular character', except that schools were to be opened every morning with the reading of the Bible and the Lord's Prayer.

After a long struggle in Parliament, during which a number of highly important amendments were made, the bill was finally passed. The secularists emerged triumphant. An attempt to secure grants for denominational schools was defeated, and the clause providing for the reading of the Bible and the Lord's Prayer was struck out; and as the history
texts of the time often had a pronounced sectarian bias a clause (which, incidentally, has never been repealed) was inserted to the effect that 'no child shall be compelled to be present at the teaching of history whose parents or guardians object thereto.' The contest between the centralists and the provincialists did not result in such a clear-cut decision: the provincialists had the control of the inspectorate transferred from the department to the boards, but the centralists were able to save the provision—much more important than it appeared to most members at the time—that gave the department power to make regulations by order-in-council. The proposed local capitation tax was strongly opposed on two grounds: that the committees would find it very hard to collect, and that it cut across the principle of free education. The clause was finally deleted, and the capitation allowance payable by the department to the boards increased from £3 10s to £3 15s.

The act gave scarcely anyone precisely what he wanted. That it was passed at all is evidence that universal elementary education had come to be widely regarded as a social necessity, and that men both inside and outside Parliament were prepared to make large concessions as to means provided only the general aim were furthered. For those who thought in this way the act, whatever its defects, represented a hard-won victory over the provincial and religious forces that had wrecked their earlier
efforts and that, given a chance, might even yet imperil the development of a national system of schools. Hence their first concern was to consolidate the position they had gained; and, as Webb puts it, the act came to be regarded ‘not as an experiment to be worked out empirically, but as an inspired compromise, a miraculously achieved balance of forces which the smallest disturbance might completely destroy.’* So vigorously did this attitude of mind persist that for many years any attempt to alter the act was practically foredoomed to failure, with the result that its omissions, inconsistencies, and defects, no less than its virtues, had profound effects on the subsequent development of public education in New Zealand.

The major administrative change during the sixty-
odd years after 1877 was the swing from local to central control, but it will be convenient to touch first on the history of the struggle that has been renewed from time to time during the whole of that period over the uncompromisingly secular provisions of the act. The story can be summarised by saying that every attempt to secure grants for denominational schools has failed, and that the same is true of the much more persistent efforts that have been made to

get legislative sanction for non-sectarian religious teaching in state primary schools, or, short of that, Bible reading and religious observances.

The Roman Catholic Church, faithful to the principles enunciated by Pius IX in 1864, has consistently held that as it cannot in conscience avail itself of the education supplied by the State, it is entitled to state assistance for its own schools. Alone among the major denominations, it has built up a separate school system comprehensive enough to provide for the education of the great majority of its children. But although there has always been a body of opinion outside the Catholic Church which has supported the claim for aid for the separatist school, Parliament has never shown any disposition to grant it. The increase of population in New Zealand and the vastly improved means of communication, together with the decline of inter-denominational strife, have, no doubt, weakened the force of some of the old objections to the subsidising of church schools, but there are other changes which have worked powerfully in the opposite direction—notably, the development of a secular view of life (as distinct from secularism as an administrative expedient), the wide extension of state activity in education, and, linked with both of these, the growing acceptance of the common school for children of all creeds and classes as a guarantee of social cohesion or an expression of democratic aspirations. There is at present no
sign that New Zealand will depart from a tradition which, in some parts of the country, has now been entrenched for nearly a century.

Non-Catholic religious opinion has never been united, one section favouring the separatist school and another some form of non-sectarian religious instruction by the teachers, while a third has supported the secular compromise as the most satisfactory arrangement in the circumstances. The second group, which eventually formed the New Zealand Bible in Schools League, has campaigned with great energy, and although it has never succeeded in having the act amended it has made a certain amount of headway by devising methods whereby the intentions of the secular clauses may be evaded. The secular defences were first breached in 1897 when the ingenious scheme known as the Nelson system was introduced. Observing that whereas the Education Act required only four hours teaching a day the Nelson schools were actually giving nearly five, the Nelson City Schools Committee, under the chairmanship of a Presbyterian minister, arranged for religious instruction to be given by the clergy for half-an-hour a week within the usual school hours which exceeded the number required by statute. During this time the schools were legally closed for ordinary secular instruction, and no child could be compelled to attend, but teachers willing to help were present in their capacity as citizens to give unofficial secular lessons to children whose
parents had sent them to school but did not wish them to receive religious teaching. The teachers might, if they so desired, assist even with the religious teaching itself. The system was adopted in many parts of the country, though it never became general, partly for the reason that the Bible in Schools League hoped to have the responsibility for religious instruction placed on the teaching service.

There is no question about the legality of the Nelson system—or is there now much serious opposition to it—but the same cannot be said of the introduction in some schools from 1936 onwards of daily devotional exercises conducted by the teachers. In this instance the move was made, at the request of the Bible in Schools League, by education boards, which took action designed to encourage teachers and school committees to adopt the practice. In 1938 the Minister of Education, while stating that he proposed to ask Parliament to make positive statutory provision for the Nelson system, said bluntly that in his opinion the exercises were ‘impinging on and setting at nought the authority of the elected representatives of the people’, and the Education Department has more recently said the same thing in different words. The matter must before long be brought to an issue, and Parliament will then have to decide how far, if at all, it is prepared to retreat from the secularism of 1877.
Although the act of 1877 was intended to give New Zealand a strongly decentralised system of education, a centralising tendency was inherent in its provisions—for it left the local authorities completely dependent on the central government for their funds and at the same time conferred on the Education Department the power to regulate by order-in-council. So much a few acute minds perceived at the time, and in one highly important respect, though in one respect only, their prophecies were immediately fulfilled. Through its syllabus of instruction, and its regulations for the inspection and examination of schools, which will be described in another chapter, the Department dominated the internal life of the schools from the outset, leaving very little indeed to the discretion of the local inspectors and the teachers. It is true that the inspectors, as officers of the local boards, were in a position to criticise, ignore, or defy departmental regulations, but most of them felt it their duty to respect them, even, as one inspector said, to carry them out with Chinese fidelity.

In nearly all other matters, however, the local authorities—the boards and the committees—remained, until the turn of the century, in full command of the situation. To be more precise, it was a period of board supremacy: within the limits of its finance, each board built schools, engaged and dismissed teachers, drew up its own salary and staffing schemes, arranged, if it were possible, for the
training of its teachers, and settled a multitude of
detailed questions, all very much as it pleased.
Parliament had meant the boards to be strong and
responsible bodies, but they assumed a degree of
power and independence which was not only incom-
patible with the vigorous committee activity that
Bowen desired, but which also prevented the central
Department from gaining the measure of initiative
and control implied in the act.

For this state of affairs boards themselves were not
wholly responsible, and this was especially so where
their relations with the committees were concerned.
In believing that it was possible for the committees
to exert a robust and enlightened influence on board
policy Bowen had assumed, among other things,
that the committees would have some financial
autonomy, and that where circumstances were
favourable several schools would be grouped under
one committee. The grouping of schools was, it is
ture, deliberately obstructed by the boards, mainly
on the ground that it would result in the creation
of redundant administrative machinery, but Parlia-
ment had already dealt a blow to Bowen’s scheme by
defeating his proposal for a local capitation tax. As
he had foreseen, Parliament thereby made it possible
for the boards to gain complete control over com-
mittee expenditure. It is, however, very doubtful if
the committee system could in any event have been
made to work in the way Bowen had hoped. Few of
the committees of the period showed much concern with educational policy, their actions were often dictated by completely irrelevant parochial considerations, and in some districts there was so little interest in the schools that committees could not be set up at all. Indeed, the apathy, conservatism, and irresponsibility that characterised so much committee administration was one of the chief causes of the growth, especially in the teaching service, of the centralising sentiment that eventually made it possible for all local authorities, boards as well as committees, to be shorn of their most important powers. In the meantime, however, it was not the Department but the boards that gained in prestige and influence through the weakness and failures of the committees.

In their relations with the central Department the boards were in a strong position from the outset: for whereas the Department was just beginning to organise itself, the boards, with few exceptions, were going concerns, with very much the same membership as the old provincial boards had had, and with very much the same permanent staffs. Men who had for years been in full command of the local administrative machines, who had an intimate knowledge of local conditions, and who could count on powerful support both from their own districts and from provincialists in other parts of the colony were well-armed to resist any undue interference by the newly-created Department. As it happened the boards were able to turn
this initial advantage into a definite ascendancy which, though sometimes threatened, remained unshaken for nearly a quarter of a century. One result was that the officers of the Department found themselves endlessly baffled in their efforts to carry out what they regarded as their chief duty, the exercise of effective supervision over board finances. This experience must have been doubly galling to men who had from the beginning been inclined to regard the boards as costly additions to an administrative mechanism that would work better without them, and certainly was not calculated to win departmental sympathy for board control. The determination of the boards to remain masters of their own domains also had something to do with the failure of the act to achieve its main objective—the rapid levelling-up of educational provision in the districts where the schools were fewest or poorest. This would have meant the allocation of grants according to the varying needs of the boards, instead of on a population basis; but that implied central supervision, and it was consequently opposed, especially by the boards that were best-off educationally, as they stood to lose on both counts. So the system continued to be far from national, some districts being much better supplied than others with schools and having better-qualified and better-paid teachers.

In remaining for so long in a position in which they could successfully resist both reasonable and unreasonable proposals for the extension of departmental
authority, the boards were helped, directly or indirectly, not only by provincialist feeling, but also by the fear of upsetting the supposedly delicate balance of forces the act had brought into being, and by public indifference to educational affairs. The great depression of the eighties and early nineties played its part by producing political difficulties and creating an atmosphere unfavourable to reform in education. Then, with the victory of the Liberal-Labour party and the overthrow of the old political order, when some immediate change might have been expected, action was delayed for some years, first because of the provincialism of Ballance, later because the government was preoccupied with its social and economic programme. One important restriction on the powers of the boards was brought about in 1897 when teachers secured the right of appeal against dismissal, but the next period in the history of educational administration in New Zealand really begins in 1899, when George Hogben succeeded W. J. Habens as Inspector-General of Schools.

More will be said of Hogben later. He was an extremely able and adroit administrator, but did not attach great importance to forms of administration, being primarily interested in changing the schools themselves, in turning the teaching service from a trade into a profession, and in extending opportunity for post-primary education. He always said that he favoured a substantial degree of decentralisation, and
there is no reason to doubt his sincerity: one of the first things he did was to relax the tight grip on the schools which the Department had previously maintained through its rigid syllabus and its system of inspection and examination. Nevertheless, the Hogben period, which lasted until 1915, saw a remarkable growth of departmental authority and a corresponding decline in power of the boards, and it opened the way for still more centralisation during the period that followed.

To begin with, the Public School Teachers’ Salaries Act of 1901, by establishing a uniform scale throughout the colony, transferred control of teachers’ salaries from the boards to the Department and at the same time made possible the introduction, a few years later, of a national superannuation scheme. The effect was to deprive the boards of any control over the expenditure of a large part of their revenue. Moreover, the Department, which now had the necessary political backing, proceeded to use its power of regulation to extend its authority over the remaining portion of the boards’ grants, and very soon the boards lost a great deal of their former financial independence and the freedom of action that went with it.

Despite this, there were spheres in which local control was still supreme. In particular, the appointment and promotion of teachers remained entirely in the hands of the boards and the committees. The teachers declared that appointments were strongly
influenced by local prejudices, that canvassing was
rife, and that it was often very difficult for a teacher
to move from one education district to another.
Eventually their organisation, the New Zealand
Educational Institute, which had become a powerful
force, began to press for a Dominion scheme of
appointment based on grading. The objective was
finally achieved in 1920, but the first step was taken
in 1914 when the Education Act of that year placed
inspectors under the control of the Department, a
change that, though sometimes advocated by the
education boards themselves, was to prove a crucial
event in the story of the decline of local control.
Of the other provisions of the act of 1914 it is at
this particular point enough to say that they further
curtailed the financial powers of the boards, and
deprived the committees of any effective control
over appointments. On the other hand the commit-
tees gained financially, especially through the pro-
vision for subsidies on voluntary contributions, and
they became from this time onward increasingly
useful bodies.

Whether or not Hogben himself, had he remained
in office after 1915, would have felt that the centralis-
ing process had gone far enough, and tried to arrest
its onward march, is an interesting question, but one
that cannot be answered. What can be said is that the
process went on apace during the decade or so
following his retirement, mainly as the result of
changes he had himself approved—the centralisation of the inspectorate and the introduction of the grading scheme. As officers of the boards, the inspectors had not only had a large hand in the shaping of board policy but had also, on occasion, been outspoken and effective critics of the actions of the Department. Now, there was no doubt that they were officers of the Department in fact as well as in name. The boards could not turn to them for professional advice with the old freedom, and they spoke, when they spoke at all, with the voice of the Department. More than this, promotion on grading as determined by the inspectors removed from the boards all control over appointments except in a limited number of special cases. As a result of these and other extensions of departmental authority, including an ever-tightening hold over board finances, there had developed by the mid-nineteen-twenties something in the nature of a deadlock. The boards were in no position to take a bold educational initiative themselves, yet they could, if they wished, seriously obstruct the designs of the Department. A system that had remained strongly decentralised for a quarter of a century had become so strongly centralised by the end of another quarter century that its principal organs of local control had, it seemed, either to be abolished in the interests of economy and administrative convenience or else given a new lease of life through some kind of reorganisation.
At this period the Department was warmly in favour of the first of these alternatives; and in 1927 it appeared that the government of the day, which was searching for ways and means of reducing the education vote, was not averse to acting on the Department's advice. Knowing that their very existence was threatened, the boards put up a spirited fight, rallied impressive public support, and won. But although complete centralisation had been averted no one in either camp could be really satisfied with the emaciated form of local control that survived, and the last ten years has been a period in which administrative reorganisation has been a constant topic of educational discussion.

Before one reviews events since 1930 it is, however, necessary to go back to 1877 and sketch the history of the administration of post-primary education. Except that it permitted boards to establish district high schools (secondary tops to primary schools), the Education Act covered primary education only. Some provision was made for secondary education in the Education Reserves Act of the same year, which set aside for that purpose a quarter of the revenues from what were formerly the provincial endowments. The schools were placed under the control of local boards of governors which were entirely independent of the education boards and entirely free from departmental supervision. Thus there was established, though not without criticism,
a division in control that reflected the profound cleavage between the elementary and the ‘public’ schools of England, and that tended to prevent any merging of the radically different traditions of primary and secondary education. As this division in control still exists, it is of some importance to note that it was in its origin as much a local historical accident as a matter of deliberate policy. English precedents, it is true, pointed in the direction that was taken, but they were partly offset by the Scottish, and had it not been that the supporters of Bowen’s bill were afraid that the introduction of one more contentious issue would kill it altogether, it is quite conceivable that they would have agreed to place primary and secondary education under the same authority.

Until the end of the century the secondary schools, despite growing public discontent, were able to pursue undisturbed their socially exclusive and severely academic educational ambitions. But when Seddon and Hogben came on the scene change could no longer be resisted. Both men wanted a wide extension of opportunity for secondary education, and Hogben wanted also to reform the curriculum and give the schools a much more realistic and practical outlook. In 1902, after ‘free places’ for pupils passing Standard VI had been instituted in the district high schools controlled by the education boards, the endowed secondary schools were offered
£6 capitation for every free-place pupil on condition that they provided additional free places at the rate of one for every £50 of endowments. Rather more than half of the secondary boards accepted the offer immediately, but some of the others made it very clear that they were not to be tempted from the path of exclusiveness. The next year, however, the free place system was, in effect, made compulsory, and all but two of the schools were brought into line. In all other respects, however, the secondary school boards and the secondary school principals remained in complete control of their institutions.

The story of Hogben’s valiant but unsuccessful attempt to induce, first the secondary schools, and then the district high schools to reshape their curricula belongs to another part of this survey. Here it is sufficient to note that failure, and to observe that in his dealings with the secondary schools Hogben did not attempt to achieve his aim through the method of unified control. One can guess his reasons. Unified control on a local basis promised little, since the education boards which controlled the district high schools had already proved unsympathetic to his ideas. He knew, moreover, that the formidable power and influence of the secondary school boards would be used in an effort to counter any scheme involving the direct intervention of the Department or any other outside authority. In any case, he really believed in the principle of the autonomy of the school so far
as its methods and curriculum were concerned. But although he failed with the district high schools and the secondary schools Hogben was not yet entirely beaten. Technical education was developing, and by allowing the establishment of day technical schools, which became in fact high schools of a type that approximated his ideal, he achieved a limited success. The technical schools were at first under the direct control of the education boards, but the act of 1914 gave them boards of managers and in effect eliminated education board control. As the secondary school boards retained practically all their existing powers, the general effect of the act of 1914 from the administrative point of view was to drive deeper the wedge separating primary and post-primary education, and to create a new division in the post-primary system.

In dealing with the technical schools Hogben had seen to it that the Department had ample power to influence their development; and after 1914 the secondary boards suffered something of the same fate as the education boards, the most important event of the period being the introduction, following the Education Amendment Act of 1920, of a national salary scale based on grading. This restricted the financial powers of the boards, and slightly limited, but by no means abolished, their rights of appointment—for post-primary teachers, unlike their primary colleagues, were graded in a few broad groups, while the secondary boards did not, like the technical
boards, have to secure the approval of the Department before making appointments. Through its inspectors, through its prescribed list of text-books, through its regulations governing the courses of free-place pupils, and through its examinations, the Department also extended its sway over the curricula and internal organisation of secondary schools, though its influence in this sphere was never as direct and far-reaching as it was with the primary or even the technical schools. Moreover, in 1927, when the abolition of the education boards was being seriously entertained, the secondary boards also were threatened with a reduction in status that would have left them with much the same authority as school committees.

Thus, from the beginning of the century, there had been a steady growth of departmental power over the whole of the educational field, primary and post-primary. But, as reformers complained, this had not been accompanied by any marked advance in the direction of unifying and rationalising the whole education system. On the contrary, old divisions had survived and new ones been created. There were three sets of local authorities, each independent of the other two; and, after 1920, there were, as Webb says, 'three different grading systems, three salary scales, three staffing systems, three methods of appointing teachers, and three scales of grants to local authorities'. Admittedly, the primary, secondary, and technical schools had their distinctive needs, but the
divisions and differences that existed could not by any reasonable argument be wholly or even largely justified on that ground, and their general effect was to complicate administration, to hinder reorganisation of the school system, and to get in the way of the development of a sense of common purpose in the three branches of the service. The deepest of the cleavages, that between primary and post-primary education, which was, as we have seen, even in its origin partly an accident, had become more and more anomalous, and more and more mischievous. The remarkable increase in the number of children going on from primary to post-primary school, the upward movement in the academic, professional, and social status of the primary service, the flow of teachers with primary training and experience into the secondary and technical services, the experimentation with intermediate schools, the fact that post-primary schools were now, like the primary schools, almost entirely dependent on public funds, the growing acceptance of the principle of education as a continuous process—all these and other factors tended either to blur the old distinction or to emphasise the need for co-operation and co-ordination. Yet, as the history of the intermediate school controversy showed only too clearly, primary and post-primary teachers tended to live in two distinct and latently hostile educational worlds.

- The Department, it is true, was far from powerless.
It had enough power to prevent secondary and technical rivalries from producing too much overlapping of educational provision, and it could try to co-ordinate the various parts of the system. But anything it could do fell far short of real unification, partly because as Webb puts it, 'effective power had been neutralized rather than centralized', partly because the divisions in the system were reflected inside the Department itself. It could therefore be said that New Zealand had developed a fairly highly centralised system of education, but one that did not possess some of the most important of the advantages that centralisation is supposed to guarantee.

This was how the general situation appeared to reformers when, in 1928, Mr Harry Atmore became Minister of Education in the United Party government. Convinced of the need for some general reorganisation, but aware of the complexities of the problem and perhaps also of the existence of entrenched vested interests, he arranged for the Education Committee of the House to sit during the 1929-30 parliamentary recess and report on 'all matters relating to education and public instruction generally'. The Committee rejected with some emphasis a departmental scheme involving complete centralisation, recommending instead a plan of reorganisation said to offer a prospect 'of reducing the admittedly excessive administrative cost of the system without sacrificing the principle of local
interest and authority’, and of breaking down the barriers separating the three branches of the service. The main proposal was that district education boards should control all schools in their areas, primary, secondary, and technical. Whether or not the complete scheme would have resulted in practice in still greater centralisation was a question on which opinions differed, as they did also on the question of how far it would have brought about educational unification and co-ordination. Nevertheless, the report did much to stiffen opposition to unqualified centralisation and to consolidate opinion favourable to unified control.

The publication of the Recess Committee’s report almost coincided with the onset of the great depression. In a year there was a coalition ministry, and a new Minister of Education, the Hon. R. Masters, who, to quote Webb again, ‘wisely refrained from attempting to combine reform with sweeping reductions in the education vote.’ But in 1935, when New Zealand’s first Labour government came into office, and its deputy-leader, the Hon. P. Fraser, took over the portfolio of education, a new period in the Dominion’s educational history began. On the administrative side there have been several changes of importance. For fifteen years the path to the position of Director of Education had lain through the primary school inspectorate which, in turn, had been recruited from men near the top of the primary
school graded list—a practice that tended to make it impossible for anyone to reach the highest post in the Department by any other route or before he was well past middle age. This tradition was shattered when Dr C. E. Beeby, who was not yet forty, and who had gained his experience in university teaching and educational research, was appointed, first Assistant-Director, and then Director in succession to Mr N. T. Lambourne; and more recent appointments to the inspectorate have shown a similar attitude towards the claims of seniority and the graded list. Another development, but one for which there is greater precedent, is the appointment of officers of the Department—the Supervisor of Physical Education is one—who, while being in a position to exercise a potent influence over some aspect of school work at all stages, are not attached to any one branch of the service. This may be interpreted as a further move in the direction of educational co-ordination.

So far, however, the basic structure of the administrative system remains as it was before 1935. Mr Fraser’s first concern was to repair the ravages of the depression retrenchments and to set in motion a comprehensive scheme for the betterment of school conditions. When he came to deal with the administrative problem he preferred to tread cautiously, beginning by inviting educational bodies to express their opinions on the various recommendations of the report of the Recess Education Committee, and
then, in 1938, bringing down an Education Amendment Bill which was immediately referred to the Education Committee of the House so that everyone could give evidence relating to its proposals. Evidence was duly taken, but for several reasons, including impending changes in the Department, the bill had not re-appeared before the House by the time the country was again at war.

So all one can say is that the proposals contained in the bill, and the reactions they evoked, give a good indication of the trend of government policy and the state of educational opinion at the period just prior to the outbreak of war. In its main proposals the bill followed the recommendations of the report of the Recess Committee. It provided for the abolition of the existing education boards and the creation of twelve new local district boards, which were to be representative of the ‘school councils’ of primary and post-primary schools and of the teaching service, and to be given jurisdiction over all schools in their area. The existing post-primary boards also were to be abolished, and replaced by school councils with more limited powers. And there was to be appointed in each district an officer of the Department, to be known as the Education Officer, whose function it would be to co-ordinate the work of the schools in his area. The discussion on the bill, before the Education Committee of the House and in the press, followed a course that could have been predicted
with almost perfect accuracy. The education boards and the primary school committees were wholeheartedly in support of the principle of local unification of control. The New Zealand Educational Institute was also very strongly in favour of unification but not so emphatic on the issue of local control. The secondary and technical boards, and their teachers, presented an almost unbroken front of opposition, alleging that the freedom, independence, and efficiency of the schools would be impaired if they were brought under district board control. There was, however, one significant exception—according to their representatives the secondary school assistants were divided on the question. As for more or less independent educational opinion, it was on the whole warmly in sympathy with the general aim of the bill, but inclined to doubt whether its detailed proposals, if put into effect, would result in very much progress towards local unification. In particular it was urged that the Education Officers should be officers of the boards and not of the Department.

Summing up, one may say that the forces making for greater unification are very strong, and appear to be gaining ground rapidly. The practical problem here, whether unification is attempted on either a central or a local basis, is to reconcile the demands of harmonious and economical co-ordination with the degree of freedom and initiative which the individual school and the individual teacher, primary
and post-primary alike, must have if education is to be vigorous and alive. The forces making for genuine control on a local district basis seem to be much weaker, as they have to contend, among other things, with the whole centralising pull of the highly-organised modern State. The position appears to be that the people of New Zealand—or those of them who take any interest in the question—are at moment decidedly opposed to complete centralisation, but that nothing short of a conscious and deliberate effort on the part of a government and the Education Department, and one sustained over a period of years and supported by the public and the teaching service, can now make it possible for local district control to become a source of real educational leadership. There are signs that such an effort may be made. If it is not, it seems certain that local district boards will become more and more merely agents and intermediaries of the Department, until, from the point of view of their original functions, they are purely vestigial structures.

In terms of the geography-history motif of the first chapter, it can be said that the failure to achieve unification of control represents, in part, a victory of history over geography. The division in the control of primary and post-primary education corresponds to the social and educational cleavage that existed in nineteenth-century England, whereas in fact New Zealand’s post-primary system is a section of a broad
THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SINCE 1878

IN THE VICTORIAN England from which most of our forbears derived their educational ideas the character of public elementary education was, as we have seen, mainly determined by the fact that it was something provided by the well-to-do for the children of the poor. In essentials, it was a process of mass instruction and rigid discipline designed to produce, at the minimum of cost, a working population that was literate, orderly, and not inconveniently critical of its lot. Public primary education in New Zealand was never so firmly tied to conceptions of social class. The shortening of the social spectrum, the sparseness of the population, and the leaven of Scottish influence were among the modifying factors that favoured the early emergence of the idea of a democratic common school. The history of primary education in New Zealand is the story of the dawning understanding of the revolutionary implications of this break with nineteenth-century English traditions, of the truth that the schools of a democracy had to be utterly
educational ladder stretching from the infant school to the university. The historical administrative form persists long after New Zealand has achieved a degree of social and educational equality that English reformers are still hoping for. History also had a large share in the secondary-technical division, since it arose directly from the attachment of the secondary schools to the ideals of the nineteenth-century English public school. On the other hand lack of unification is in a measure merely the result of administrative action dictated by expediency, or, more often, designed to solve immediate practical problems as they arose.

As for centralisation, it was at first held in check by a combination of history and geography—British traditions and local provincialism. Then, as time went on, the geographical principle began to work the other way—provincialism declined, communications improved, and, in the absence of strong voluntary organisations, the central government came to have in social and educational matters an importance that it had never possessed in the home countries, though even in them, of course, it became more and more active. Yet history was not as completely routed as in some of the other British Dominions, the Australian states for example, with their very highly centralised systems, partly because no one of the four main cities ever achieved a position of unquestioned dominance. The complete framework of local control has been retained and unqualified centralism firmly resisted.
different from the culturally-impoverished and repressive institutions provided for the ‘lower orders’ of a society in which class-stratification was an article of faith.

The events leading up to the act of 1877 which laid the basis of a national system of primary schools have been sketched in the previous chapter. The ambition of the founders of the system, and of the Rev. W. J. Habens, Inspector-General of Schools from 1878 to 1899, was to make the schools good of their type, and they took as their models what they conceived to be the best English and Scottish elementary schools of their time. The ‘subjects of instruction’—what dreary associations the phrase has gathered—were set out in the Education Act, and in due course the Education Department issued a detailed syllabus prescribing the work for each of six ‘standards’. For the times, and for teachers who in the provincial schools had taught little more than the three Rs, it was a comprehensive and exacting programme, as not even the smallest school could omit any of it except as ‘the result of actual necessity, of which the Inspector must be the judge’. The effort to make the curriculum as broad as possible and to establish and maintain standards was not merely a symptom of a desire to give the country full value for its money; it sprang in part from genuine enthusiasm for education, and was possibly a recognition of the fact that the New Zealand primary school was destined to become a
common school for practically the whole community. To this extent perhaps the founders of the system admitted the desirability of adaptation to local needs and conditions; beyond that they took it for granted that the kind of instruction and discipline current in the elementary schools of Britain was entirely appropriate to the children of New Zealand. As a result even school playgrounds were sometimes on the British model. In the thinly-populated New Zealand of 1877 when land could be had for a song the Education Act itself had laid it down that ‘whenever practicable there shall be attached to each school a playground of at least a quarter of an acre’. As both letter and spirit of the act were often observed only too well, a later generation was left with the very difficult and sometimes insoluble problem of providing children in city schools with even moderately adequate playing space. So too school buildings with their galleries, nine-foot desks, and provision of little more than a square yard of floor-space for each child, were copied directly from Britain. On occasion they were actually built facing south, and one may see in the Auckland province to-day the high-pitched roofs originally designed to cast the British snow. So little adaptation was there at first to the conditions and opportunities of the new country that many a New Zealand school and playground could have been set down in one of the congested industrial areas of the homeland without appearing in any way out of keep-
ing with its general surroundings. As for the syllabus it was, broadly speaking, the syllabus of the English elementary school, somewhat stiffened up. It continued also to be widely assumed that the work of teaching—‘the irksome task of public instruction’ as the English phrase had it—could be successfully performed by anyone above the age of thirteen or fourteen who was respectable in character and knew a little more than the pupils themselves. Moreover, in its general spirit and day-to-day life the New Zealand primary school of the Habens period reproduced all too faithfully many of the unlovely features of its English prototype. There was a movement towards better things, but for various reasons progress was painfully slow and halting.

The national system had scarcely been established when New Zealand entered on the long depression of the eighties and nineties. Educational expenditure was cut in 1880 and again in 1887. One result was that enlightened plans for the training of teachers had to be abandoned and that the pupil-teacher system remained, until after the end of the century, the only form of training available to the great majority of intending teachers. Matthew Arnold said that in England this form of apprenticeship supplied the sinews of primary instruction. The same remark could have been made of New Zealand. The details of the pupil-teacher system varied from district to district, but, up to the late eighties at all events, the
apprentices were usually primary school pupils who, at the mature age of thirteen or fourteen, were indentured for four or five years. During this time they taught in school hours, sometimes under the eye of an adult teacher, sometimes not, and at the end of the day, received from the headmaster or one of the assistants, instruction in the subjects of the curriculum and the principles of class management. No picture of education at this period is even approximately correct unless it is kept in mind that much of the regular work of the primary schools was carried out by adolescent boys and girls struggling to impose their will on bored and unruly classes containing children little younger, sometimes even older, than themselves. The pupil-teachers received perhaps £20 per annum in their first year and £60 in their fourth; the scheme was quite as much a method of securing cheap labour as a means of training. Its typical product, among those who could stand up to its rigours, was a 'strong disciplinarian' and an efficient —frequently highly efficient— instructor whose outlook had been limited and prematurely hardened by over-work in an atmosphere that was often singularly devoid of grace and intellectual vitality. The miracle was that there were some who came through the mill with alert minds and warm human sympathies.

In addition to perpetuating the pupil-teacher system, the cuts in the education vote made it impossible for the boards to improve the unenviable lot
of the adult teacher. In some districts conditions worsened. At the end of the provincial period many children were not attending school at all, and the first concern of the boards was to provide accommodation. The problem was particularly acute in those districts in which few schools had been established, or in which there was a scattered or a growing population. Finding their building funds inadequate, the boards encroached on the money provided for the payment of teachers and the general maintenance of schools, with the result that in some districts salaries fell to a wretchedly low level, below that of the ploughman and the labourer. In 1898 over two-thirds of the teachers (exclusive of pupil-teachers) in Taranaki, Marlborough, Nelson, Grey, and Westland, received less (often much less) than £100 a year, and of the 2500 teachers in the whole colony only sixty-seven got over £300. There was, moreover, no pensions scheme. At this time more than four-fifths of the pupil-teachers were girls, many of the abler men teachers left the service to take up other occupations, and it was freely predicted that the work of the schools would ultimately be done entirely by women. An appointing authority could not, in such circumstances, be too exacting in its demands, and the service retained, in its lower strata, many who should never have been allowed to enter it. In any case even a teacher of genius might have demurred if he found that his class numbered well over a hundred children.
—and there were classes of that size—and that books and equipment were supplied on the most meagre scale. What is in the circumstances really remarkable is not the sorry condition of the worst schools of the period but the achievement of its best teachers.

There were, of course, more general influences at work. The schools would in any case have reflected the dominant Victorian attitude towards children. We find this expressed in very vigorous language by R. J. O’Sullivan, Inspector of Schools under the Auckland Education Board, in his report for 1881. O’Sullivan rejoices that ‘we do not of late find so much maudlin sympathy for young culprits who have been treated in some measure according to their deserts’, but insists that there is still far too much ‘rewarding, pampering and praising of children’ and calls on ‘Board and Committees, parents and the Press, and every good citizen’ to assist teachers ‘to fight against this system of truckling to pupils, which is fast producing a despotism of children which must become a danger to the State.’ He winds up by declaring in round terms that children ‘should be taught to walk in quiet paths, and should be relegated to their proper and natural position of insignificance.’ Such opinions, which were widely and fervently held, were strengthened by the spectacle of a good deal of wild and disrespectful behaviour among the youth of the country. Another inspector complained: ‘The marked want of common politeness which
characterises the pupils of many schools must be a matter of frequent remark. In vain do you wish them “Good-morning” or “Good-day” for they are sure to disregard your civil salutation, and probably laugh rudely in your face or stare you out of countenance. There are even villages in which I account it an honour not to have my name called out as I pass along the street.’ And there were endless complaints of a much more serious kind. The lusty, boisterous, quarrelsome, hard-drinking, half-literate life of a not inconsiderable section of the population was not, indeed, calculated to produce boys of the type admired by Dean Farrar. It was, moreover, the general belief of the time that a well-controlled class, even of infants, was one in which children sat in studious immobility, never so much as whispered, and executed their periodical ‘class movements’ with military precision. One sometimes gets the impression that the Victorian child was compounded in roughly equal parts of pure intellect and original sin.

Nevertheless, a much more rational and sympathe tic attitude was developing. O’Sullivan himself, who was remarkably enlightened in many of his views, was emphatic that young children needed plenty of opportunity for free movement in the open air. In 1878 W. C. Hodgson of Nelson, whose inspectorial reports constantly remind one of Matthew Arnold’s, wrote: ‘A school is not a penal institution, and such a system of repression as would compel absolute
silence throughout the school day is hardly worth introducing into institutions where more than a fourth of the inmates are under seven years of age.' Fourteen years later he was able to report that 'The improved methods of treating their scholars now generally adopted by teachers are a fair subject for congratulation. The loud harsh tones in which it was customary to address a class a few years ago are now seldom heard. . . . The notion, too, formerly so prevalent, that a slip due to carelessness, or, it might be, to want of wits, should be visited, as a matter of course, by sharp and summary corporal punishment, is gradually dying out—though it dies hard. . . . I hold these matters to be of the highest importance, largely affecting, as they do, the tone and temper of so many thousands of children. Much has been gained when the unchecked and, indeed, almost unheeded tyranny that saddened school life not so many years ago, is condemned both by public opinion and by the improved feeling of the teachers themselves, and that this change has been effected without any noticeable relaxation of discipline.' In point of fact, Hodgson was over-optimistic, and practices of the kind he condemned remained common for many years afterwards.

A major reason for the slowness of the change was the nature of the syllabus, and the system of inspection and examination of schools which was introduced in the interest of efficiency in 1878 by Inspector-General
Habens, and held the schools in a vice-like grip for nearly a quarter of the century. From the same source sprang a good deal of the arid formalism that characterised so much of the teaching.

The syllabus itself breathed an abstract, bookish intellectualism from cover to cover, and its approach throughout was austerely logical. Far from taking as a starting point the interests and experience of the children themselves, it succeeded to an astonishing degree in isolating facts from any human context whatsoever. It was laid down, for example, that in geography the requirements of Standard III would be satisfied if the pupil could point to important places on the map—'it is not necessary that he be able to say also in every case what circumstances or events have rendered the place important.' The prescription for drawing for Standard I—that is, for children who were often about seven years of age—began: 'In the first Standard the pupils must be able to distinguish vertical, horizontal and oblique lines, to recognise such lines when they see them, to give the lines their appropriate names, and to draw them with ruler and without ruler at dictation. They must know that when two lines cross one another four angles are presented to view, that the size of the angles is independent of the length of the lines, that one pair of angles may be larger than another pair, that when there is no such inequality the angles are said to be right angles and the lines are mutually perpendicular. . . .
scientific definitions will not be demanded, but the pupil must be able to use and apply the several geometrical terms required, and give approximate verbal explanations of their meaning. They must also know how to draw lines parallel or perpendicular to one another. . . .’* ‘To secure full approval’ the needlework of Standard I girls had to consist of: ‘Threading needles and hemming. (Illustration of work: Strips of calico or a plain pocket-handkerchief.)’

It was the duty of the inspector to examine once a year all the standard classes in each school in his area; ‘the examination is to be so conducted’, said the regulation, ‘as to enable the inspector to say of any individual pupil that he has passed, or that he has failed to pass, a given standard.’ The most experienced head teacher of the largest school had no power to promote a child from one class to the next. It was a system that, like ‘payment by results’ in England, had consequences that were almost wholly bad but sometimes grimly amusing.

School committees, education boards, the general public, and many of the teachers themselves soon came to judge a school by the ‘percentage of passes’ it secured; and a teacher’s standing and chance of promotion depended above everything else on the showing made by his pupils at the annual examination. Hodgson remarked, with weary exasperation: ‘The

*The quotation is from the 1892 syllabus. This method of introducing small children to drawing was, however, by no means uncommon twenty years later.
undoubting faith with which the majority of mankind will bow down to an idol of their own creating is simply astounding. The figures of an inspector claim to do no more than record how many scholars out of a number that a teacher has thought fit to present have complied with the minimum requirement. Yet these figures are almost universally accepted as though they gave a mathematical demonstration of the exact status of any given school.' There followed a breathless 'race for percentages'; teachers restricted themselves as closely as possible to the examinable parts of the syllabus, and pressed year after year for more detailed definition of the standard requirements. The months immediately preceding the examination were apt to degenerate into an orgy of cram, involving much 'keeping-in', long hours of home-work, and unremitting punishment for 'carelessness' or 'laziness'. Among the less scrupulous teachers the techniques of 'window-dressing' and of hoodwinking the inspector reached the level of a fine art. 'On examination day', writes one inspector, 'festoons of flowers, mingled with leaves, hang prettily on the walls, while ferns adorn the angles and doorways. . . . Mottoes of welcome are in the ascendant.' Backward children, who were almost certain to fail and 'lower the percentage of passes', were on occasion actually forbidden by their teachers to be present. Something of the atmosphere on the
day itself may be gathered from an inspector’s description of how, ‘in a high-toned school, one is struck by the air of earnestness pervading the classes, by their look of seriousness and even anxiety, and by the diligence with which the answers are revised and improved, until the expiry of the time allowed. Such a sight as this gladdens the heart, and forces on one the recognition of the momentous importance of the moral training, in the widest sense of the term, which is being imparted in every school.’ On the day following the examination there was the ‘Inspector’s Holiday’, during which the inspector marked the written work, beginning with the simple sums and spelling of Standard I, fixed the classification of the children for another year, and calculated the ‘percentage of passes’. In due course the results were published in the press for the information of an eager public consisting not only of parents but also of a few inveterate gamblers who, quick to see the analogy between horse-racing and the ‘race for percentages’, had put their money on their favourite school.

The ‘individual standard pass’ was under fire right through the Habens period. Most of the inspectors had opposed it from the beginning, and the New Zealand Educational Institute, which spoke for the teachers, attacked it year after year. Indeed, there is little one could say in condemnation of it that was not said at the time, and said with pungency and force.
It was a system that achieved a narrow and half-spurious efficiency at enormous cost. It tended to turn inspectors into educational policemen and to reduce the teacher to the level of the hack examination coach. But it was the children on whom it bore down with the most painful weight, particularly the duller of them who had somehow to be forced to ‘pass’; the successful teacher’, said a president of the New Zealand Educational Institute, ‘gives far the greater part of his time to driving on the dunces.’ Often enough, particularly in schools with a reputation for great efficiency, there existed a state of open warfare between teachers and pupils, with rebellion from below breaking out at periodic intervals and being put down from above by merciless flogging. Moreover, the whole tendency was to emphasise the factual and formal aspects of an already factual and formal syllabus. Arithmetic—that highly examinable subject—was intensively drilled, and took up about a third of a child’s school life. In English formal grammar was heavily stressed—it too was easy to examine. Geography was apt to be little more than the memorising of strings of capes and bays, mountains, rivers and lakes, and capitals; and since a typical prescription in history began ‘The succession of Houses and Sovereigns from 1066 A.D. to 1485 A.D. . . .’ there was every suggestion that this subject too should be treated in a similar way. A common approach to science is illustrated by the following ‘object lesson’,
which was printed in *The New Zealand Journal of Education* for 1900 as a model for teachers to follow:

**'Standard II: Coal'.**

**Materials.**—Pieces of coal brought by children. Picture of forest showing dense undergrowth of ferns, etc. If possible a piece of coal showing impression of leaf.

**Experiment 1.**—Children examine pieces of coal very closely, and teacher by questioning elicits that

**Conclusion.**—Coal is smooth, bright, hard, black, and like a stone.

**Experiment 2.**—Child puts piece of coal into a vessel of water, and coal sinks to bottom.

**Conclusion.**—Coal is heavy and will not float.

**Experiment 3.**—A pupil strikes piece of coal with hammer and it breaks into pieces.

**Conclusion.**—Coal is brittle.

**Experiment 4.**—Pupil takes small piece of coal in tongs and holds it in flame of lamp. Children notice a puff of smoke. Coal swells and then bursts into flame.

**Conclusion.**—Coal will burn.

**Note.**—Elicit that coal is dug out of the ground, and tell that it once formed part of a forest (show picture). Forests have been buried for thousands of years. Show mark of leaf on coal.

**Summary.**—Coal is a black, shiny, hard, brittle, heavy substance. It burns easily and gives great heat. We use it as fuel. Coal is not a mineral though it is dug out of the ground. It is formed from trees and plants that grew in the forests of long ago.

The best of the inspectors and teachers were well aware of the need for humanising the curriculum, adapting it to the interests of the children, and linking it up with their immediate environment. Henry Hill, the inspector of schools for Hawke’s Bay, demanded to know why the children of the Forty
Mile Bush should 'go in imagination to a country they have never seen, and to a period in its history which neither they nor I can duly realise, to obtain their first conceptions of history', and declared that they were being given 'stones instead of bread' and made 'the victims of a cruel and unnatural system of teaching'. Some teachers began, quite early in the period, to cultivate a taste for gardening and to try to develop a real feeling for nature study; others made a feature of singing, refusing to regard it as a regrettable distraction from the serious business of the school; a few even managed to impart life and interest into the examination subjects. But by and large the system was stiff with formalism and highly resistant to new ideas. A whole generation of New Zealanders had a narrow and mechanical conception of education stamped into its mind.

Even a rough sketch of the primary school in the Habens period would be incomplete without some further reference to school attendance, and to the relations between teachers and school committees. Attendance was obligatory between the ages of seven and thirteen, or until Standard IV had been passed, though for only half the period during which the school was open. Even so, the compulsory clause was laxly enforced—the school committees were reluctant to take action against their neighbours or, it might be, one of their own members—and some children escaped school altogether while others came
very close to doing so. In the eighties it was no uncommon thing for a quarter of the children in a school to be absent three times out of four, and another quarter twice. Bad roads and truancy were among the causes, but the main reason was that many parents were indifferent or hostile to the school, or kept their children away so that they could work in the home or on the farm—hard, unremitting manual labour was still pretty much taken for granted as the natural lot of childhood. The majority of children, especially boys in the country districts, left school for good at the age of about twelve, after passing Standard IV. The attainments of the average boy who left school at this stage were neatly summarised by Hodgson: 'He can read a passage of ordinary difficulty from a newspaper, not well, but intelligibly; he can write a short letter on some simple subject in a legible hand, and probably without gross misspellings; and he knows enough of figures to be able to make out or check a tradesman’s bill. As to the rest of his acquirements,'—Hodgson was replying to the charge that the youth of the country was being ‘over-educated’—‘no apprehension need be felt that the scraps of geography, grammar and history that he may have picked up should be a serious obstacle to his success in life.’

The school committees had wide powers: in some districts they virtually appointed the teachers, and they could, if they set their mind to it, make a
teacher's position practically untenable, or, on the other hand, protect him from the consequences of his incompetence. Appointments sometimes turned on completely irrelevant considerations, such as membership of the right church, and the teacher was often hard put to it to maintain freedom of action in his own professional sphere. School committee elections often provided an opportunity for the prosecution of the local feuds that bred so readily in small and isolated communities, and that often involved the teacher himself. Feeling could run high: 'after the meeting was over', reported a North Island paper in 1885, 'the members of the school committee hostile to our popular and excellent teacher were hooted and tin-kettleed to their houses by one of the most excited and indignant crowds ever seen in Warkworth.'

One of the ablest and most outspoken of the educational critics of the Habens period was George Hogben, who as we have seen, became Inspector-General of Schools in 1899, and was in command of the Education Department for the next sixteen years. He had come to New Zealand in 1881 as science master of the Christchurch Boys' High School, and was later an inspector of schools under the Canterbury Education Board and then rector of the Timaru Boys' High School. The son of a Congregationalist minister, Hogben was in many respects a typical representative of intellectual nonconformity—a man of strong personal convictions, a little proud, as he said of himself,
of his 'fads', and forthright in his expressions of opinion. Liberty for the teacher was the first article of his educational faith, and he believed firmly in systematic moral instruction in schools. At Cambridge he had distinguished himself in both classics and mathematics, but although he retained a taste for Horace, it was mathematics and science that interested him most deeply. In educational theory he aligned himself very decidedly with the reformers who, all over the world, were attacking formalism and verbalism and pleading for a scheme of education that would be 'closer to life'.

Hogben threw himself into the task of reform in the spirit of the Opposition leader who is at last given a chance to govern, and if he did not succeed in transforming the primary school, the main reason was that neither the teaching service nor the general public was prepared for the rapid advances he wanted to make. Nevertheless, the Hogben period saw important developments in every direction. The colonial scale of staffs and salaries, introduced in 1902, gave teachers an increase in salary, removed the fear of cuts to provide money for buildings, and was the first big step in the direction of reducing the size of classes. In 1906 the teachers' superannuation scheme came into operation, and two years later, after further salary increases had been granted, the New Zealand Educational Institute reported that 'the conditions of the teaching profession in the Dominion, except for
the urgent need of a promotion scheme, must now be regarded as on the whole satisfactory.’ But although there was a definite improvement in their economic position, the rank and file of teachers were still poorly paid, and huge classes of eighty, ninety, and a hundred children were by no means uncommon. In such matters the administrator must work within the limits of the available finance, and parliamentary opinion, though favourable to increased expenditure on education, was not prepared for revolutionary changes. With the curriculum, however, and the inspection and examination of schools, Hogben had a free hand. One of his first actions as Inspector-General was to bring into operation new regulations designed to free inspectors and teachers from shackling restrictions: ‘an atmosphere of liberty’, he said, ‘is the only one in which true teaching can thrive.’ The inspectors retained wide powers—they could, if they wished, examine all the standard classes in the old way, but they were obliged to conduct individual examinations only in Standard VI, for the purpose of awarding proficiency certificates, and Hogben laid it down specifically that ‘the work of an inspector will be qualitative rather than quantitative: he will influence the character of the teaching instead of attempting to measure the amount of knowledge possessed by each individual child.’ The annual examination of Standards I to V became a duty of the head teachers; Hogben would have gone further and left head
teachers quite free in the matter, but he was unable to get sufficient support from the education boards, the inspectors, and the service itself.

About the same time, and with the object of giving reality to school work, manual training was introduced into the curriculum. The scheme provided for such pursuits as paper-folding, plasticine-modelling, brushwork, cardboard modelling, gardening, cookery for the older girls, and woodwork for the older boys. Unhappily, much of the programme followed current European practice, which was based on a stilted and highly artificial conception of handwork. Heavy emphasis was laid on the development of manipulative skill by means of a graded series of exercises ‘from the simple to the complex’, on ‘the co-ordination of hand, eye and brain’, and on the inculcation of habits of carefulness and accuracy. It was a form of technical training that quite overlooked the creative and constructive impulses of children, and that resulted in the production of objects, candle-sticks made of carton paper, for example, that were neither useful nor beautiful. Ironically enough, the very practices that were introduced in the interests of realism were those that often provided the most glaring instances of rigid formalism; and the fact that woodwork and cookery were usually carried on in separate ‘manual training centres’ generally meant that these activities were completely divorced from the rest of the curriculum. School gardening fared rather better than
other forms of practical work, though even it could be made dull enough. It is pretty much an open question whether the manual training of the Hogben period did more good than harm to the children submitted to it, and it certainly implanted sterile conceptions of art and handwork which have proved exceedingly tenacious, and have seriously hampered progress. Alas, it is easier to be aware of a disorder than to prescribe the appropriate remedy.

During his first few years of office Hogben was carefully preparing the way, partly by means of a series of conferences at which he expounded his educational ideas with unflagging enthusiasm, partly by means of regulations designed to extend the teacher’s freedom, for the introduction of an entirely new syllabus for primary schools. The syllabus of 1904, which Hogben drew up practically single-handed, is rightly considered a landmark in the history of New Zealand education. Frank Tate, Director of Education for Victoria, and another apostle of ‘the new education’, who was in New Zealand when the syllabus was introduced, wrote of it: ‘The New Zealand syllabus . . . is permeated with the best of modern educational thought. There is, throughout, an attempt to import reality into school work, to bring the teaching into closer contact with the outdoor life of the pupils, to throw overboard merely conventional information in favour of what will be genuinely interesting and serviceable.
It demands rational methods by making use of the principle of interest, by cultivating the self-activity of the pupil, by aiming at developing his individuality and generating real mental power. 'It affords great scope for the immediate application of a knowledge of the facts and the principles underlying them.' Nowhere else in the world, perhaps, was there a more serious attempt to embody the best theory of the time in an official syllabus.

Schools, however, are not transformed at once by new regulations and a new syllabus; instruction became more comprehensive and more efficient, a few outworn practices were left behind, but the schools remained, generally speaking, formal institutions dominated by a drive for measurable results. The reasons were many. For all its great virtues, the syllabus itself continued to reflect the Victorian pre-occupation with intellectual analysis to the neglect of emotional and aesthetic values, and it was overmuch coloured by the mathematical and scientific interests of its author. In addition it demanded much more knowledge and professional skill than the majority of teachers possessed; when it was first issued it produced among the rank and file of the service consternation bordering on panic. Hogben, it was true, was emphatic on the need for training—regulations that came into force in 1905 provided that, in general, entrants to the service would in future spend two years as pupil-teachers and two at a training
college—but it is doubtful if he fully appreciated the limitations and difficulties of the ordinary teacher. Enormous classes created almost insuperable problems for the most conscientious and enthusiastic. The external proficiency examination remained, and in the lower standards the internal examinations conducted by the head teacher often had precisely the same effects on the teaching as the inspectors' examinations of the Habens period. But the main force at work was the formal tradition itself which, with some exceptions of course, was active in the minds of inspectors, teachers, and the public alike and was not easily to be supplanted by the liberalism of a visionary, even if he were Inspector-General of Schools.

The period provides one interesting example of temporary divergence from English practice—the primary school cadet corps, which, stimulated by the imperialism of Seddon and his colleagues, increased rapidly in the years immediately following the South African War. The boys drilled with dummy rifles, learned to shoot with real ones, and wore a regulation uniform consisting of blue woollen jersey, blue cloth knickerbockers, blue stockings, and Glengarry cap with diced border. The corps were not abolished until 1912, when an entirely new system of physical training, based on the English syllabus of 1909, was instituted.

From the very foundation of the national system the New Zealand primary school showed a pro-
nounced tendency to rigidity and inertia; broadly speaking, it was satisfied to keep pace with changes in the English elementary school, but its reaction-time was slow—anything up to a decade—and there was often a disposition to regard liberal developments abroad with dark suspicion. The results of this conservatism became especially marked during the twenty years that followed the retirement of Hogben, the period, roughly, from the beginning of the Great War to the end of the Great Depression. The early part of this period saw, all over the world, one of the most remarkable revivals in educational history; it was a time of sweeping plans for educational and social reconstruction, of bold theorising, and striking innovations in practice. In all democratic countries there was a widespread demand for thorough-going reform in the primary school, both for improved material conditions for teachers and children, and for a scheme of education conceived in terms, not of mass instruction and external discipline, but of balanced development in an atmosphere of freedom and creative work. Nowhere in the world did this movement completely revolutionise the schools, but if there were some countries that progressed more slowly than New Zealand, there were others, often with more limited opportunities, that went well beyond her. In some very important respects the English elementary school, despite the handicap of its class associations, forged far ahead.
The period from 1915 to 1935 is perhaps most notable for the increased attention given to the physical well-being of school children. A striking report by the school medical officers published in 1917 shows how great was the need for action. The report noted that half to two-thirds of the children examined since the establishment of the school medical service in 1912 needed the service of doctor, dentist, or oculist; that it was 'not at all uncommon' to find children wearing six to nine layers of clothing restricting the chest; and that many country children never drank fresh milk. Attention was drawn also to the effects of systematic overwork out of school hours. As for the schools themselves, the report pointed out, among other things, that eye-strain was resulting from the reading of books printed in unsuitable type, and, in the case of young girls, from concentration on fine sewing; that 'the custom of making children fold their arms either before or behind produces marked deformity in susceptible children'; that the lighting in many classrooms was highly defective; that there were still in existence old-fashioned long desks which encouraged poor posture; that in some classrooms the windows had never been made to open; that in the large majority of schools the temperature in winter was far below what was prescribed by law for shops and factories; and that many schools were extremely dirty.

Partly as an outcome of the work and influence of
the school medical and dental services, there was, during the years that followed, a decided improvement both in the standard of school hygiene and in the health of the school child. Many old buildings were remodelled; new open-air schools and classrooms were built; health camps were established; and there was a remarkable development of physical education on the recreational side, especially swimming. Some types of disease and deformity that were common among children at the beginning of the period had by the end of it practically disappeared.

The second important change was in the teaching service itself which became decidedly more attractive, especially to men. The proportion of women to men in the service increased steadily during the whole of the Hogben period, and in the years immediately following the war the ratio remained, until 1925, almost exactly 2 to 1; but from that point the trend was reversed and in 1935 the ratio was a little less than 1½ to 1. There were several reasons for the change: somewhat better salaries, more liberal allowances for training college students, and a growing respect for the teacher’s office as the service became professionalised and as the ancient contempt for those who work with children tended to disappear.

Progress in these directions may not have been spectacular, but it was rapid in comparison with the changes that took place in the spirit and day-to-day life of the primary school. There was, it is true, a
general trend away from formalism and repressive discipline. More stress was laid on the liberal and humanistic side of the curriculum, arithmetic was simplified and treated more rationally, manual training and outdoor activities received greater attention, and school government became much milder. Here and there teachers made a clean break with the didactic tradition. Yet in comparison with the better elementary schools in England and the United States all but a handful of the very best New Zealand primary schools were culturally-impoverished institutions, handicapped by over-large classes in rooms crowded with desks, by extremely limited library facilities, by officially prescribed textbooks that, with few exceptions, fell much below the best overseas standards, and by very restricted provision of equipment. The arts and crafts lagged badly; so also did music, though it improved considerably before the end of the period; in few schools was there a serious attempt to link school work with the local natural and social environment; and although some classrooms became very happy places, there were others in which children were still submitted to crude mishandling.* The typical teacher spent the great bulk of his time in strenuous classroom teaching of the conventional kind, and concentrated most of his attention on the achievement of examinable results.

*As there still are. For a variety of reasons the new knowledge of child development has never made a deep impression on the minds of teachers in any branch of the education service.
The gap between accepted theory and actual practice became so wide that it was admitted by inspectors and teachers alike, and many explanations, most of them obviously partial, were advanced. It was not, indeed, an isolated phenomenon; in many fields New Zealand’s social and cultural life had become flat and unprogressive, and there was a sense of frustration in the air. In such circumstances the school system lacks stimulus and a sense of direction, and administrators and teachers tend to fall back on mechanical efficiency. Neither the proficiency examination, nor the system of grading and inspecting teachers—two of the most popular explanations—could have had so marked an effect if the general temper of the country had been different.

The grading system, however, provides an extremely interesting example of local invention and adaptation. It crystallises two very strong tendencies in New Zealand life and education—on the one hand, the passion for equality of opportunity in the race for vocational success, and on the other the colonial tendency to carry over into the sphere of human organisation the objective, mechanical habit of mind developed during the pioneering struggle with material circumstances. As we have seen, the grading system had its origin in the pre-war years and was finally established in 1920. Since that time all primary teachers have been graded on a scale of some 200 points by a national body of inspectors, and, except for
some special appointments, promotion is rigidly determined by position on the graded list. The chief advantages of the system—admittedly very solid advantages—are that it eliminates nepotism and that it allows teachers to move freely anywhere within the Dominion. The chief disadvantage is that it tends to make teachers too acutely aware of the annual* effect of their activities on their promotion, and inspectors more conscious of their judicial than of their advisory function. In practice it has undoubtedly tended in the direction of a stereotyped uniformity—partly on account of its immediate effect on teachers and inspectors, partly because it is based on the assumption that teachers are, as it were, standardised spare parts of differing sizes that can be fitted into their appropriate niches in any school in the Dominion, irrespective of its special aims and circumstances. The grading system is, indeed, both a symptom and a cause of marked divergence from one well-established English tradition—the emphasis, even at the elementary stage, on the organic individuality of the school—and the English educationist is apt to be shocked by it. But although New Zealand teachers are aware of at least some of its defects they are, quite naturally, very reluctant to give it up without a guarantee of some other substitute for local appointments and some other protection from local favouritism.

*The Education Department has just decided to introduce biennial grading, a reform that should lessen some of the bad effects of the present system.
At the end of 1935, when New Zealand elected its first Labour government, the primary school entered on a new era in its history that recalls the early years of the Hogben period at the beginning of the century. The three decades between these two points had been a time of pedestrian plodding interrupted by brief spurts and occasional halts and set-backs, and they had ended, during the Great Depression, with sweeping educational retrenchments. Unlike its immediate predecessors, the new government regarded education as a major issue, and it was pledged to go ahead at full steam. The Minister of Education, the Hon. P. Fraser, was an enthusiastic adherent of the ‘new education’, as much interested in bringing about a changed spirit in the schools as in extending and equalising educational opportunity. The social temperature favourable to reform mounted rapidly, and reached its high point during the New Education Fellowship conference held in 1937. To see the biggest city halls crowded to the doors by audiences that had come to listen to speakers on education was a new experience for the Dominion. The conference greatly strengthened the position of the reformers: for it made clear, even to those who were not in sympathy with its somewhat revivalist atmosphere, that in many fields New Zealand had much educational leeway to make up, and it showed further that principles widely regarded as dangerously heterodox had the
backing of men and women whose practical and administrative competence was beyond question.

As for the government's programme, it must rank as the boldest attempt yet made in New Zealand to give the primary schools the status and the conditions that correspond to their functions as the common schools of a democracy. Steps were taken to reduce the size of classes, to provide more spacious, healthy, and attractive classrooms, to safeguard the physical health and well-being of children and to extend educational facilities in rural areas. The teachers got, among other things, a more generous salary scale. On the scholastic side one of the most important projects set in hand was the preparation of a new set of text-books which are to have a decided flavour of New Zealand life. Up to the present time, however, the action that has had the most widespread and immediate effects is the abolition of the proficiency examination, a measure that had the double purpose of liberating the primary school teacher from cramping restrictions and removing the last remaining barrier to free post-primary education. The uncertainty and hesitation that followed the change gave clear evidence of the extent to which concentration on examination requirements had prevented teachers from thinking about the practical and cultural value of what they were asking children to learn. This phase is passing, but anything in the nature of a general transformation of the schools can occur only as the
cumulative result of a number of influences working over a fairly long period.

For more than half a century New Zealand has been a political democracy, and her state primary schools have been common schools almost from their foundation. At first these facts were interpreted to imply uniform and universal provision of efficient elementary schooling of the type imported from Britain in the nineteenth century. And the aim was achieved. Few countries did more to even up the educational opportunities of town and country children and to ensure that the instruction given did not fall below a certain minimum level of efficiency. Yet in the nineteenth century itself there was in New Zealand a body of opinion that realised more or less clearly that elementary schooling of the traditional kind did violence to child nature and was ill-adapted to serve the educational needs of a democracy. It might have been expected that a young country would quickly have followed this lead and made radical changes in the whole character and quality of schooling, but in fact educational liberalism has had many defeats and few decisive victories. Is it fanciful to see here the working of the peculiar colonial conservatism discussed in the first chapter? That would seem to be part of the explanation. A good deal of the rest is to be found in the individualist traditions brought from
nineteenth-century England. These have led, in New Zealand as elsewhere, to the acceptance by a large part of the community of almost any form of schooling provided only it opens the door to vocational success. Since 1935 the movement to liberalise the primary school has been gaining ground over the forces indifferent or hostile to it, but it would be a mistake to assume that it has achieved a permanent victory, even inside educational circles. Much will depend on the ability of the school itself to demonstrate the virtues of the new dispensation; the fact that the primary school, in spite of all its handicaps, has not been the least resilient of our educational institutions gives ground for hope.
THE CLASH between geography and history has nowhere been more evident than in post-primary education. Nowhere has there been a more pious regard for tradition, a more self-conscious attempt to reproduce the original pattern, a more vehement denial of any need for adaptation to New Zealand conditions; and nowhere, in the long run, have those conditions brought about more striking divergences from British practice. Indeed, the English or Scottish educationist who visits New Zealand to-day is at first apt to be baffled by our complex post-primary system and only gradually perceives that its unfamiliar features are a reflex of a social and economic structure very different from that he knows at home.

Education of a secondary character arose in the first instance to meet the demand of a very small group of middle and upper middle class emigrants, many of whom had been educated in the grammar schools, 'public' schools, and universities of Great Britain. Of all classes they had least cause to be
critical of the social arrangements of the homeland, and they hoped to enjoy in the antipodes the rights and privileges that went with their social position. It was natural that they above all others should feel the nostalgic yearning for home and try to cultivate a small piece of Britain in the colonial wilderness. The wealthier among them (like some of their successors) often sent their sons back to England to get the same kind of schooling they had themselves received—the classics and mathematics on the intellectual side, and on the social side a training in the code of the Victorian gentleman. If that were impossible a local school was the next best thing, and it was generally assumed that it would be a good school precisely to the extent that it approximated the standard British model. There were some interesting exceptions. For example, the preliminary prospectus of the first high school to be established in New Zealand, Christ’s College, not merely admitted but underlined the claims of agricultural studies. In practice, however, and usually in theory as well, it was taken for granted that the ‘good old fortifying classical curriculum’ was the only avenue to culture and the best possible preparation for public and professional life in New Zealand. Not that all who could afford such an education for their boys actually sought it. Some among the first generation even of the colonial aristocrats, though men of culture themselves, were curiously indifferent to the education of their children,
while the men of humbler origin who ‘made good’ in the new land often insisted that a boy should ‘be at work instead of wasting his time with Latin and Euclid. This was one of the reasons why so many of the early schools were poverty-stricken institutions that had a hard struggle to survive and why so much of their work was of a purely elementary kind. Nevertheless secondary education was at first, indeed for many decades, the exclusive domain of the classes who, if not wealthy, at least possessed moderate means. There was little or no demand for it from any other group. At a time when universal primary education was still a dream, and the development of industry and commerce and the public services had not yet created a market for large numbers of workers who were more than literate, a good elementary schooling represented the summit of the ambition of the great bulk of working and lower middle class families. In any case the few schools that could really justify the claim to give ‘instruction in the higher branches of knowledge’ charged substantial fees that put them beyond the reach of the ordinary person. In this way the socially selective and narrowly academic traditions of English secondary education took firm root in many parts of the colony.

To this general picture, however, Otago presented a partial, but important, exception. As we have seen, the Otago Scots inherited educational traditions which in some respects corresponded very neatly
with the needs of an agricultural colony that was moving hesitantly in a democratic direction—there was the tradition of the district high school, and the tradition that secondary and higher education should be accessible to the ‘lad o’ pairts’. Moreover, both these principles were in due course embodied in the Otago school system. Otago, therefore, had built a bridge—a very narrow one, admittedly, but still a bridge—across what the conventional middle and upper class English colonist had regarded as a gulf that could not and should not be spanned. It was a portent of changes that would have profoundly shocked not merely the well-to-do English colonists but the well-to-do Scots as well; in the meantime it helped to strengthen the growing conviction that the ‘lad o’ pairts’ should get his chance.

The general intention of the acts of 1877, so far as secondary education was concerned, was stated by Bowen when he said that ‘the higher branches of education may be taught upon payment of a fee—a sufficient fee—and there is also provision for scholarships which enable children of unusual attainments and ability to carry on their education. It is not intended to encourage children whose vocation is that of honest labour to waste in higher schools time which might be devoted to the learning of a trade when they have not got the special talent by which

*Theoretically the same principle was sometimes admitted elsewhere in the colony, but in practice it was a dead letter.
higher education might be made immediately useful.’ Taken as it stands this is not far from the Scottish view, since it admits the claim of the clever child of poor parents, but in practice it was on the whole the English rather than the Scottish tradition that prevailed during the first twenty years after the passage of the acts. The expansion of secondary education was slow, and little was done to even up opportunity either as between poor and well-to-do homes, or as between the country and the towns. There was, it is true, a scholarship system, but it was neither generous nor equitable and failed to give help where help was most needed; and although education boards had authority to establish district high schools, only a handful were created in addition to the five that already existed in Otago when the Education Act was passed.

As yet then there was no marked break with traditional views about the place of secondary schools in the general educational scheme. Still less was there any departure from British conceptions of the kind of institution a secondary school should be. Indeed, the Education Act itself laid down as the subjects district high schools might teach: ‘all the branches of a liberal education comprising Latin and Greek classics, French and other modern languages and such other branches of science as the advancement of the colony and the increase in population may from time to time require. . . .’ In practice foreign languages
and mathematics remained the staples for all children in both secondary and district high schools, though, as the century wore on, French tended to replace Greek and English got a firmer footing. The ‘other branches of science’ were generally neglected. If touched at all they were usually taught from the text-book, with little or no experimental work, and no attempt whatever to use the rich material of New Zealand’s natural environment. As late as 1900 James Adams, who, as headmaster of the Thames High School, had some years before revolted against the general practice and related the teaching of science to the needs of his mining district, declared that ‘our primary schools do not fit children to be anything but shopmen and our secondary schools do not fit them to be anything but lawyers’.

Adams was by no means the only critic, but for most of his colleagues the English ‘public’ schools with their characteristic ethos, their academic curriculum, their prefect system and their organised games, represented if not educational perfection the nearest thing to it in an imperfect world. After 1888, moreover, any tendency to stray from well-trodden paths was discouraged by the academic requirements of the matriculation examination (later re-named the university entrance examination). Previously the schools had examined their own work—a monstrous thing in those days and the subject of indignant criticism—and it was a case of their submitting to
the control of either the Education Department or
the University. The principals of the schools finally
elected to accept the matriculation examination of the
University as the hall-mark of a secondary education,
a choice that many years later, when ‘the domination
of the matriculation examination’ was a stock com-
plaint, some of their successors were sadly to regret.

Something of what this unbending conservatism
implied may be gathered from Hogben’s first report
on the secondary schools, published in 1901. He
wrote that ‘in most schools . . . the language teach-
ing consists to a very large extent of the dry bones
of grammar, and of detached sentences based on
grammar rules; the consequence is that the total
amount of time spent on grammar is . . . abnormally
large. . . . I fear that I fail altogether to see any
virtue in mere gerund-grinding; and the fallacy that
pupils acquire a knowledge or appreciation of the
literature of the languages they learn needs only to
be mentioned in order to become manifest.’ English,
he said, was well taught, but he was very critical
of the formalism of much of the work in mathematics
and science. Hogben pointed out—the same argu-
ment, alas, had to be used forty years later—that the
majority of children receiving secondary education
in New Zealand did not spend more than two years
at school, and that not one pupil in twenty went to
the University (it is one in sixteen to-day). In such
circumstances, he asked, why should the whole school
programme be framed to lead up to the university entrance and junior scholarship examinations? And, in particular, what excuse was there for including two languages in the curriculum of the large majority of pupils, when they could get ‘but the merest smattering’ of either? Five-sixths of the pupils, Hogben thought, should learn one foreign language only, and that a modern one, and the teaching should be enlivened by the adoption of more rational methods, including a free use of translations. In short, he wanted to see applied throughout the secondary school the same principles that inspired his syllabus of primary education. The time had come ‘when all concerned should seriously consider the expediency of recasting . . . the whole framework of higher education’.

And indeed it had. On the one hand, what passed for a liberal education was for many children a dry mental gymnastic. On the other, technical education had been making but slow progress. It was not that the colony had no urgent need for technical knowledge and skill: its basic industries of farming and mining were often conducted with great inefficiency, and the same was true of many of the skilled trades. An education board complained that ‘the almost universal abolition of apprenticeship’ had ‘left a void which imperatively demands attention from the Government . . . .’ Such technical instruction as there was owed much to the University, which established
first a school of mines (in 1878) and later schools of agriculture and engineering; John Nicol, the historian of the New Zealand technical schools, remarks that the university authorities and teachers in some special fields were technically-minded long before those in control of secondary and primary schools showed any marked interest in vocational training.* In 1885 Stout, who was then both Premier and Minister of Education, tried to persuade the secondary schools to introduce practical courses, pointing out firmly that institutions dependent on public funds were in duty bound to supply the needs of all social classes. But with an odd exception or two, the appeal was rejected or simply ignored. For some years previously, however, public and semi-public bodies in different parts of the colony had been running with varying degrees of success part-time classes in art and technical subjects, and after 1893 they received a little assistance from government funds. In this way there grew up small technical schools that catered for apprentices and others through evening classes.

Here perhaps is the clearest illustration of the general thesis of this book. You have a country just emerging from the pioneering stage, a country proud of its practicality and adaptability, a country already describing itself as 'the social laboratory of the world'. Its education, you may think, will be close to the concrete, absorbed in the present, rather boyishly

*The Technical Schools of New Zealand (1940), p. 4.
SECONDARY SCHOOL CADET MUSKETRY INSTRUCTION
experimental. What you find is just the reverse: practical classes for young adolescents are relatively few and have been established in the face of general opposition and indifference, while the great bulk of the secondary school population are engaged—and, it is widely believed, very properly engaged—in attempting to master chilly intellectual abstractions. It is a situation that reveals in an unmistakable way the double-mindedness of a colonial culture—an ‘old’ mind intensely traditional, a ‘new’ mind intensely empirical. The ‘old’ mind found full expression in the secondary schools, which, indeed, tended to identify themselves with the order that had been overthrown by the political revolution of the nineties, even, on occasion, to see themselves as guardians of a code and a culture that democracy threatened to sweep away. They provided obvious examples of the ‘colonial snobbery’ André Siegfried dissected so deftly—the attempt to keep alive transplanted social forms that had withered in the New Zealand soil.* The ‘new’ mind, on the other hand, failed to impress itself on education by reason of its very empiricism. The optimistic, trial-and-error, jack-of-all-trades practicality of the pioneer scorns ‘theory’ and is impatient of discipline. Nicol is able to say: ‘It is a simple fact

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*Where the curriculum was concerned their conservatism was reinforced by the doctrine of formal discipline which, in the nineteenth century, reigned supreme almost everywhere. If you believed, as many teachers did, that gerund-grinding invariably gave a good mental training there was no conflict between your professional conscience and your professional interest in the perpetuation of gerund-grinding.
that all the forward moves in New Zealand's system of technical education were inspired by educationists or individual enthusiasts; they did not come in response to demands made by industrial organizations.* And one recalls Sydney Webb's acid comment on the lack of serious social and economic study in New Zealand at the time when the Seddon government was legislating with such cheerful confidence. Thus the pioneer does not turn readily to education for assistance in practical affairs. When he does, the demand is usually for narrow ad hoc technical training, not for the kind of practical education that gives an insight into scientific principles and economic and social life; and this, unfortunately, simply confirms the traditionalist in the belief that his critics are hopeless philistines, as in fact some of them are. The unhappy reformer is therefore apt to find himself in a no-man's-land between a traditionalism remote from everyday life and a make-do practicality contemptuous of theory.

Moreover, the 'new' mind was only partly 'new'. It still remained thoroughly individualistic. The agitation for free post-primary education was essentially a move on the part of lower middle-class families for the opportunity to 'get on' within the existing scheme of things. It was not a move for a 'new' education for a 'new' democracy; on the contrary the desire to 'get on' was rarely balanced by a strong

*Op cit., p. 214.
interest even in personal culture. That fact must be taken into account in any judgment of the schools. The demand has always been for courses with a market value, so that, to take an extreme instance, practical-minded country people have insisted on their children learning Latin (which is useful for examination purposes) and resented the introduction into the curriculum of the arts and crafts, or health education or even agriculture.

How stubborn all these influences were was shown not only in the opposition of some of the schools to the entry of free-place pupils but even more in their response to Hogben's appeals for reform. He was not, it is worth repeating, a revolutionary—his basic values were those of any number of liberal-minded men of his time—and he was not doctrinaire. Yet the schools scarcely budged. In the case of the secondary schools Hogben offered grants for manual work, science, and agriculture, hoping thereby to induce them to break away from their formalism. They took the grants and developed instruction in physics and chemistry, but it soon became clear that the teaching of these subjects, even when it was linked with some experimental work, could become as lifeless and examination-ridden as any others. There was, however, still a chance with the district high schools which had begun to spread rapidly through the country—they increased five-fold between 1898 and 1914. Hogben had a vision of them as community-centred rural
high schools with a realistic curriculum intimately related to country needs and conditions. It was a momentary vision. With one voice the country districts demanded—and got—matriculation courses, and the schools, with over-worked staffs of only one, two, or three teachers in the secondary departments, could do little to provide alternatives. The district high schools have always been—to some extent it must be confessed rightly and inevitably—a channel through which country boys and girls have flowed into the towns and cities to take up clerical jobs or get training for business and professional careers.

Meanwhile the Manual and Technical Instruction Acts of 1900 and 1902 had opened up a new and hopeful prospect for technical classes; they had in fact done a great deal more, for they had made it possible for the Education Department to give grants to day schools in which ‘technical instruction’ as ordinarily understood was but a part of the curriculum. Hogben, perhaps, had seen the need of furnishing himself with an insurance policy in the event of his failure to convert the secondary and district high schools. At all events when, after 1904, they were still showing no signs of repentance he did nothing to discourage the technical schools in the four main centres from developing full-time day classes to do at least some of the work the other schools declined to handle. For some years, however, Hogben refused to sanction the creation of technical day schools
outside the four main centres, hoping even yet that the existing secondary schools would make adequate provision for their short-course pupils and for others for whom the matriculation syllabus was unsuitable. He was again disappointed and in 1912 had authority given for the establishment of further technical day schools. Such was the roundabout way in which New Zealand got a type of educational institution which not only proved exceedingly popular but is in some respects unique.

Hogben's mounting desperation is easily understood. The free place system established the principle that post-primary education should be available not merely to the able few but to all children who could at the end of Standard VI pass a test of no more than moderate difficulty. Further, the number of children actually claiming free places increased from year to year much more rapidly than he or anyone else had expected. The corollary was obvious. So long as secondary education remained the privilege of wealth or of exceptional capacity it could continue to follow traditional lines with some show of justification, but the more it tended to become the right of all, the more imperative was the need for change. If the schools were not to fail dismally they had to cater for the needs of large numbers of boys and girls destined not to a life of cultivated idleness nor to an assured position as members of a ruling class, not even, in many cases, to professional and business
careers, but to earn their living and use their leisure as members of the rank-and-file. The argument is, of course, even stronger to-day when all children who finish a Standard VI course may, irrespective of their attainments, go on to a post-primary school, and when more than three-fifths of them actually do so. And it will be stronger still if the school-leaving age is raised to fifteen. The gradual relaxation and ultimate abandonment of the selective principle, which is still basic to English and Scottish educational policy, is, perhaps, the most important single fact in the history of post-primary education in New Zealand. It means that some of the problems that most plague British teachers and administrators simply do not arise in this country, for example the very difficult problem of finding a method of selecting children for post-primary education that does not, like the old type of examination, put the primary schools in an educational strait-jacket, and that is at the same time reasonably reliable, not unduly cumbersome in operation, and acceptable to the public. But it means also that New Zealand has had to face long before Britain the problem of devising a suitable form of post-primary education for children without academic interests. Broadly speaking, the day technical high school is New Zealand's answer to that problem.

The New Zealand technical high school is sui generis: it is, in effect, a secondary school strongly biased towards industry and commerce but much
less specifically vocational than the term 'technical' ordinarily implies. Its present form has been determined both by the facts of the New Zealand economic situation and by deliberate educational policy. In other countries a technical school is typically a trade school serving the needs of a single industry or a group of allied industries. New Zealand conditions have always been hostile to the development of this sort of institution. Manufacturing has been much less important than agriculture, and there has never been any large concentration of allied industries at any one centre; on the contrary the general picture is of a wide range of industrial processes carried on in small plants and businesses scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country. Hence an institution that undertook full responsibility for trade training would find itself asked to provide a great variety of courses for relatively few learners, which even if it were practicable would be extremely costly. Technical education, if it were to develop at all widely, had therefore to take on a more or less generalised form. And in the case of most entrants to industry it could be argued that a change of this sort was actually desirable. In New Zealand as elsewhere mechanisation had split up many of the highly-skilled crafts into a number of routine and semi-routine operations that could be learned quickly and easily; and apprenticeship, though it still existed in a number of trades, had everywhere lost much of its old significance and
was in extreme instances completely meaningless except as a method of indenturing cheap labour. Thus it could be said that many boys entering industry did not need specific trade training but rather a realistic education of a more general nature that was designed, so far as it looked to the vocational future, to produce adaptability and handiness and to give some insight into scientific principles. Such an education could be conceived in part as a substitute for the old craft-culture and in part as a pre-vocational training suitable for those intending to enter, if not any branch of industry, any one of a large group of trades, such for example, as the building trades. This, in somewhat over-simplified terms, was the theory developed in detail by W. S. La Trobe, who was director of the first technical day school (which opened in Wellington in 1905) and then for a long period (from 1918–38) Superintendent of Technical Education.

As early as 1904 when La Trobe drew up plans for his new day school, he had in mind an institution largely pre-vocational, a bridge between the primary school on one side and apprenticeship, the advanced evening classes and technological institutions of university rank on the other. The outline of a new kind of school was already taking shape. It is, however, important to emphasise that the day school was not conceived as something complete in itself. La Trobe saw that the industrial changes which had
undermined the apprenticeship system and split up some skilled trades into a number of more or less routine jobs had at the same time created a need for highly-trained technicians. In later years it was a disappointment to him that as the result of the apathy of industry itself comparatively little advanced work was done in technical school evening classes; and so far as he could help it he never allowed evening classes to be regarded as a mere appendage to the day school.

A year or so after the Wellington school was established another influence was at work in the person of John Howell, who arrived in New Zealand in 1906 to take charge of the Christchurch Technical School. The achievement of Howell’s first eight years has been summarised by Nicol: ‘Beginning from bed-rock, he had overcome prejudice in influential quarters, secured land to the extent of thirteen acres, erected adequate classrooms, workshops and laboratories, an assembly hall and a residential girls’ training hostel, built up a well-organized evening school attended by 1000 students and developed a vigorous, ably-staffed and disciplined day school of over 400 pupils. . . . His school became a missionary centre, and by no mere accident did it come about that six out of the country’s eight largest technical schools were for long periods controlled either by Howell himself or by men whom he had trained.’ The quality of Howell’s influence was no less remarkable than its vigour. To quote Nicol again, ‘in the technical day school, and
as far as possible in evening classes, he sought to develop an urbanity of manners and catholicity of spirit which New Zealand had not yet dreamed of associating with the vocational or pre-vocational training of clerks, domestic workers and apprentices.' Even less, one may add, had Britain dreamed of anything of the kind. Music and drama, literature and art, games and social activities, all had an essential place in his scheme. Unlike most of his secondary school colleagues, moreover, he approved of co-education, detested corporal punishment, and saw no reason why all boys should be compelled to play the same games. And because of his capacity for turning visions into realities many of his ideas and practices became in the way Nicol describes accepted technical school traditions. He gave technical education humanistic aims of much wider scope than even La Trobe, whose outlook was always decidedly liberal, had at first conceived, and in so doing pushed the schools still farther away from current English trade school ideas.

In the long run, however, La Trobe's influence was certainly not less far-reaching. As Superintendent of Technical Education he worked to build up the schools, to improve their conditions, and to keep them true to what he considered their proper line of development, and it was all done so quietly and with so light a touch on the administrative controls, that many who should have known better were scarcely
aware of what he was achieving. He had a profound concern for the short course pupils who formed the bulk of the technical day school population, especially for those about to enter industry, and for the young people already at work who came to evening classes for specialised training, and he believed that the first and essential duty of the schools was to cater for their needs. The historical accident that left the technical schools free to teach almost anything they chose made it possible for them to expand their functions until they overlapped those of the secondary schools themselves; and whether from misplaced ambitions or from mistaken ideas of what was of real cultural value to their students they were prone to the very disease of bookishness and formalism that they had been intended to cure. La Trobe was well aware of this danger and did his utmost to make the pre-vocational day school genuinely realistic in its outlook and methods and to build up the more or less advanced technical work of the evening classes. He was therefore not merely the administrative architect of the system but also a vital and independent force in the strictly educational sphere.

Given the peculiar circumstances of its birth and infancy it was very probable that the technical day school would take something like its present form and grow fairly vigorously; it is obviously a response to local needs and conditions and as such represents
in a general way what we have called the geographical principle. Yet there was nothing inevitable about the spectacular growth in technical day school roll numbers, or about the speed with which the schools achieved substantial parity with the secondary schools in such matters as buildings, staffing, and equipment, or about their strong emphasis on cultural and social activities and their early divergence from traditional nineteenth-century attitudes towards co-education and school discipline. La Trobe and Howell were not the only men responsible for these developments. But the part they played in them was quite extraordinary. No other part of the education system bears so unmistakably the impress of individual personalities.

There are to-day twenty-one technical high schools in New Zealand and seven combined secondary and technical schools as compared with thirty-nine state secondary schools and ninety-five district high schools. If we leave aside the Elam and Canterbury College Schools of Art the technical day schools fall into two broad groups: those in the four main cities and the larger provincial centres where secondary schools also are available; and a somewhat smaller number which have to meet—or are expected to meet—all the post-primary needs of their districts. As one would imagine the schools in the first group are much more 'technical' (in the usual sense of the word) than those in the second. Of the day-boys enrolled in them three-quarters take an industrial course (building or engin-
eering) and of the girls well over half a commercial course and another quarter a 'home life' course. A small proportion of the pupils takes a general course with one foreign language (invariably French) and French is included in the courses of other pupils who want the university entrance examination as a preliminary to professional work in engineering or commerce. Nearly everyone now agrees that French has little relevance to the present or future needs of most of the technical school boys and girls who attempt to acquire it and that the time it consumes could from any point of view be much better spent. But even the schools which feel this most keenly have had to some extent to bow to examination requirements. Many of the technical schools in the smaller centres are indistinguishable from rural secondary schools that have developed an agricultural or industrial side to their curriculum. One, the Feilding Agricultural High School which owns and runs its own farm, has become, under the directorship of L. J. Wild, a rural post-primary school of the kind Hogben used to advocate. At the other extreme there are a few schools that are in many ways more academic than some of the smaller secondary schools—which is a warning against over-emphasising the distinctiveness of technical school theory and practice and forgetting how much they have in common with those of other types of school.

The technical high school proper is, nevertheless,
one of New Zealand's very few original contributions to education. A very well-qualified English observer recently wrote of it: 'My general verdict . . . is that New Zealand has evolved a type of school having some inevitable and some removable disadvantages but offering nevertheless a preparation for life which takes reasonable account of the probable future career of the great majority of its pupils on the economic side, but not exclusively on that side. After all, there are not many states of which this could be written, and although we in England have some excellencies which I do not find in New Zealand, I am by no means confident that we solve, or partially solve, the problem of pre-vocational training for anything like so high a proportion of our youth.'* The same writer has said that something very like the New Zealand type of school could well be established in certain areas in Britain. It would be an interesting climax to a movement that began as a protest against the traditional secondary school imported from Britain herself!

We must now return to the secondary schools which we left at a point just before the Great War. The story of the next quarter century or so runs roughly parallel to that of the primary schools during the same period. There is a remarkable change in

opinion, a much smaller change in practice, and hence a widening gap between the two; and there is a similar struggle over the external examination, in this case the university entrance examination.

The change in opinion begins to become evident about 1920. From this time onwards the schools declare that they are anxious to broaden their curriculum and give a larger place to modern interests but that they are frustrated by the university entrance examination. This theme becomes more and more insistent until, in 1937, we find the Secondary Schools Association (which is representative of both principals and assistants) passing the following resolutions: 'That in view of the proved necessity for adjusting the secondary school curriculum to meet individual differences while retaining the elements of a liberal education, drastic revision is necessary; that the curriculum has adhered too long to traditional valuations, has disregarded the findings of educational psychology as regards subject isolation and the transfer of subject values, and has lost touch with the realities of modern life and especially with the changing needs of our own society; that the curriculum through prescriptive deference to external examinations and to false valuations thereby engendered of foreign languages and mathematics, fails entirely to interpret social studies as a preparation for citizenship, sectionalizes when it should integrate science, and neglects the rich cultural content of the province of art; that the curriculum
should contain a cultural core of English, Social Studies, General Science, Health, Handwork, Art and Arithmetic and that all other subjects should be relegated to the sphere of pre-vocational options to be taken in accordance with individual needs and interests; that the Matriculation examination so far as it affects secondary schools should be abolished. . . .

Here indeed is a revolution in ideas—a ‘cultural core’ including ‘Health, Handwork and Art’ and excluding Latin, French, Algebra and Geometry! It is permissible to doubt whether the outspoken terms of the resolutions represent the innermost convictions of a large majority of the secondary school service, but the fact that the resolutions could be passed, and passed unanimously, is evidence enough of a real and widespread change of feeling.

Such a statement from the secondary service itself makes it unnecessary to argue the point that there has been but a slight widening of the secondary school curriculum and no profound change in the spirit of the teaching. Art and music are more in evidence than they were even a few years ago; there has been a vigorous development of school clubs catering for all kinds of recreational and cultural interests; and in all subjects the quality of the teaching has steadily improved. It is true, too, that the schools now offer at least one course that does not lead to the university entrance examination, and nearly always two. The girls’ schools have a ‘home life’ course, or a com-
mercial course, or both, while the boys' schools have commercial, industrial or agricultural courses. But nearly three-fifths of the girls and over three-quarters of the boys still take a university entrance course with one or two foreign languages. The basic reason, of course, is that a certificate intended only to give entry to higher education has come to be demanded as qualification for jobs in business and for many semi-professional occupations.

From 1921 onwards various plans for relieving the schools of the pressure of the university entrance examination were discussed. But there was much opposition to reform—mainly on the ground that the examination was necessary to maintain standards—and those who were in favour of change could not agree on a detailed scheme. In 1934 the Education Department, in co-operation with the University, attempted to solve the problem by instituting a departmental school leaving certificate which was of the same standard as the university entrance examination, but was designed to permit of a broader curriculum for pupils who did not intend to go on to the University. The practical effects of the move were negligible. In 1938 more than two-thirds of the state secondary school principals reported that the school certificate examination had given them no relief at all. The trouble was that the business and semi-professional world continued to demand 'Matriculation'; indeed, a considerable part of it, despite the
propaganda of the Education Department and the schools, was not aware that the school certificate existed. By this time the University itself was seriously considering the substitution of a scheme of accrediting for the entrance examination. When accrediting was first mooted in the early nineteen-twenties, the secondary schools had on the whole supported it and the University had been suspicious. Now, curiously enough, the position is the other way round, though as late as 1938 a majority of state school principals still favoured accrediting. In 1939, however, the Secondary Schools Association rejected the scheme being discussed by the University and proposed instead that the qualification for entry to higher education should be the school certificate followed by one satisfactory year in the sixth form. Fear of over-inspection and a reluctance to undertake the responsibility involved in accrediting both seem to have played a part in this decision. The University on its side was not prepared to accept as a pre-requisite for entrance an examination it did not control, and one that could, as a matter of fact, be abolished by a stroke of the departmental pen like the proficiency examination before it. And at the last meeting of the Senate (held in January 1941) the original scheme was finally approved in a slightly modified form. Whether or not this marks the beginning of a new era in secondary education it is at present impossible to say.

Changes in school government are, if anything, less
marked in the secondary than in the primary schools. The relations between teachers and pupils are certainly much more candid and sympathetic than they were, and are sometimes excellent, but that improvement has taken place within a framework of control that remains pretty rigidly authoritarian. The typical secondary school is a highly organised oligarchy in which life is closely ordered from above and in which the plain citizen has little or no voice in matters of real importance.* This state of affairs is, on the whole, taken for granted by teachers, by parents and the general public, † and by the pupils themselves. Yet it is surely not easy to defend in principle. The effects of external discipline on the tougher characters are notoriously superficial and apt to be sloughed off at the first opportunity, while more docile minds may be left in a condition of unhealthy over-dependence on adult authority. And fairly simple logic suggests that a scheme of education giving such limited scope to the exercise of initiative and responsibility is not the best sort of instrument for the creation of an alert and self-disciplined democracy. A few New

*Much of this and what follows, applies also to many schools outside the secondary system; the technical school tradition, for example, is one of mild external discipline, rather than internal discipline in the modern sense.

†J. E. Strachan, who introduced a system of self-government at Rangiora, writes: ‘Attacks on the school began very soon after I took charge. . . . For years the chief bone of contention was the School Council and its subversive effect upon discipline. The impression created and freely discussed was “the kids ran the school”, and that the teachers had no authority. As a matter of fact “the kids” have “run the school” in an emergency and done it very well, for which we have all been grateful to them, but that was not the reference.’ See his The School Looks at Life (1938).
Zealand schools have recognised this and gone some distance in the direction of ‘self-government’, but there is little sign of a general move. Here as elsewhere the university entrance examination is a serious obstacle, since self-government cannot work effectively unless the majority of pupils accept the purposes of the school and see meaning in what they are doing. Moreover, in the big city schools the mere weight of numbers is a hindrance. The main influence, however, seems to be the public school tradition, with its overwhelming emphasis on conformity and the production of the type (though, as a matter of fact, some quite radical experiments in this field have been conducted in the English public schools themselves). It would be an exaggeration to say that the attitude of the typical principal is the same as that of a traditional public school man like Cyril Norwood: ‘The business of a school is to work, and to get on with its life without bothering about Whys and Wherefores, and abstract justice, and the democratic principle.’ But it seems to be closer to that than to the point of view of, shall we say, a cautious exponent of the doctrine of freedom in education like Sir Percy Nunn. On the question of co-education there has been a bigger change of opinion: a substantial section of the secondary service now favours the mixed school, though it is not yet accepted, as it is among technical teachers, as the normal educational arrangement.

The most courageous break from tradition has been
made by J. E. Strachan, headmaster of the Rangiora High School.* As Strachan saw it, the conventional school was a screen between the living interests of the adolescent and the real world of nature and civilisation that it was the business of education to interpret. Tinkering was not enough. There had to be a new curriculum, new methods, new relations between teachers and children. The Rangiora curriculum is divided into four sections: science (a short course in physiography leading on to biology, the main science study); technology ('a survey of the world at work'); sociology; and the fine arts. These studies are correlated and interwoven with a comprehensive course in world history, and the whole curriculum is carefully integrated around the central theme of 'human life'. Strachan lays great stress on constant reference to the local environment (technology develops from local community surveys and work on the school farm), and on the principle that learning is most effective when it is a response to felt needs. Then, as an essential part of the whole scheme, there is a thorough-going system of self-government. All pupils, no matter what other work they do, take the general course. More specialised pre-vocational and cultural activities—'functional developments' as Strachan calls them—grow out of it. In a rural school the main 'functional development' is naturally the agricultural course, but some pupils may, and do,

*Strachan expounds his theory and practice in *The School Looks at Life* (1938).
turn to other things, even to foreign languages. Strachan regards the ordinary university entrance course as a poor intellectual diet even for the academically-minded minority, but he has been forced to make some concessions to the public demand for it. For this and other reasons he is far from claiming that the school completely represents his own ideal, still less that it could or should be copied in detail by other people. Nevertheless Rangiora points clearly to the general kind of transformation one would expect to take place in the secondary schools of a democracy that was concerned with the deepening of its intellectual and spiritual foundations.

As for the district high schools, they were until recently dominated in the same way as the secondary schools by the entrance examination, despite the fact that only a tiny fraction of their pupils proceeded to the University. In 1933, however, their curriculum was broadened to allow of three courses—the university entrance course, a farm course, and a home crafts course. Since that date there has been a steady development of 'non-academic' activities, though few schools have attempted drastic reforms or become definitely community-centred. An outstanding contribution to district high school theory and practice has been made by H. C. D. Somerset, whose aims and general outlook are somewhat similar to Strachan's.*

* A brief account of Somerset's work is to be found in his *Littledene: A New Zealand Rural Community* (1938).
Up to this point it has been assumed that there are two levels of education, primary and post-primary, and that the primary school provides an eight-year course and keeps its children until the age of thirteen or fourteen. This is still the general situation, but nearly one-sixth of the children in Forms I and II (the old Standards V and VI) are now in reorganised intermediate schools and departments.

The history of the intermediate schools goes back to the beginning of the nineteen-twenties. For at least a decade before that time educationists in North America had accepted the principle of a consolidated junior high school for children between the ages, roughly, of twelve and fifteen. In Europe also it had in many countries been decided that primary education should end and post-primary education begin somewhere between the ages of ten and twelve. England herself adopted the principle in 1926, some years after many of her European neighbours.

In its early stages at least the New Zealand movement was a reflection of these overseas developments rather than a response to widely felt and clearly-defined local needs. And that was one of the main reasons for the intellectual confusion that has been its peculiar curse. This is not to deny the existence of a general case for intermediate schools that was as valid in New Zealand as elsewhere. That case has been stated succintly by C. E. Beeby: 'The strongest single argument for the intermediate school is that
it can offer all the advantages of consolidation: ability-grouping, differentiated courses, specialist teaching, more generous equipment, better social and sport facilities, more efficient exploration of aptitudes—all are made possible by the fact that the intermediate school is a consolidated school.’ Moreover, ‘the intermediate school caters for an age-group that has educational needs different from those of the age-groups immediately below and above;’ and ‘it can reduce the gap between primary and post-primary school on the one hand, and between school and work on the other.’* But it was one thing to accept such general arguments as these, and quite another to work out the theory and practice of an intermediate school suited to New Zealand conditions.

Reorganisation began in 1922 during the ministry of Sir James Parr, who had been greatly impressed by the American junior high school. The movement was launched with confidence and enthusiasm, but by 1927 the official attitude towards the new schools had become distinctly step-motherly. ‘The proposed reorganization’, wrote the Hon. R. A. Wright (who had succeeded Sir James Parr), ‘has been received with a certain amount of caution, if not reserve, mainly because of the uncertainty of its effects upon both primary and secondary schools and the lack of sufficiently definite information regarding the cost. . . .’ Despite these doubts, a few more schools were

THE ENGINEERING SHOP AT A TECHNICAL COLLEGE

A TYPICAL COOKERY CLASSROOM
established. And so matters drifted on until 1932, when the Hon. R. Masters introduced an entirely new policy. Sir James Parr's junior high school had been a three-year institution straddling the last two years of the primary course and the first of the secondary and technical. The course was now reduced from three years to two, the name 'junior high school' was changed to 'intermediate school or department', and less liberal staffing and salary scales were brought into operation.

Behind these hesitations and shifts is a very complicated story. Much of the trouble arose from the lack of a clear-cut and self-consistent intermediate school policy, and that in turn was once again largely due to a failure to adapt and synthesise ideas borrowed from abroad. New Zealand drew some of her intermediate school theory from England and some from the United States. From England was derived the idea that the main purpose of the intermediate school was to provide for an early beginning with secondary subjects (such as foreign languages) and with commercial and technical studies. From the United States came the idea that the school should be primarily exploratory in purpose, a place in which children could 'try themselves out' before embarking on specialised courses. Up to 1932 the main emphasis in official pronouncements was on early specialisation, after 1932 on 'exploration', but it was usually implied that the schools could carry out both functions. It was
never explained how, in Forms I and II, children could cover the ordinary primary school course, make a serious beginning with secondary studies and at the same time, be given a chance to test themselves out experimentally in a fairly wide range of other activities. Moreover the whole concept of ‘exploration’ remained nebulous; and even if it had been fully understood in its American sense, there was the difficulty that the schools had neither the staffing nor the equipment to carry out more than a fraction of the functions it implied. Inevitably, the lack of a lucid and consistent policy reflected itself in difficulties in the schools and hampered the development of the whole movement towards reorganisation.

There was, however, another grave obstacle, the impossibility of pleasing all the parties concerned. The layman, especially when he was interested as parent or committee-man in a primary school threatened with decapitation, had to be convinced that reorganisation was in any way desirable. As he often saw it, the status and efficiency of the contributing school would be seriously lowered by the loss of its senior pupils (and hence its football team!), its headmaster and highest-graded assistants, and part of its capitation grant, while the senior children themselves would gain little or nothing in return for the disadvantage of having to travel farther to school. Public opposition to reorganisation could be very lively, very vocal, and very stubborn, but experience
soon showed that it usually faded away once the new school was in being. A much more serious obstacle lay in the conflicting attitudes and conflicting interests of the primary and post-primary branches of the education service. The burning issue was whether or not junior high schools should as a matter of general policy be attached to existing secondary or technical schools. Such a prospect was more than inviting to the post-primary schools, but highly distasteful to the primary service, which, through the New Zealand Educational Institute, recommended ‘that for large towns there be established one or more of the following: tops to existing primary schools; “bottoms” to reformed* secondary schools; separate central schools.’ As the Institute’s proposal was in its turn far from acceptable to the post-primary schools, who saw their Third Forms threatened, it was impossible for the administrator to do anything positive without antagonising one or other section of teaching opinion. It was by no means entirely a naked struggle of interests. Each side saw the junior high school as a more or less idealised, more or less modified, version of the type of school with which it was most familiar—and the two pictures were very different. On the other hand there is, to quote C. E. Beeby, ‘one objective fact that should be kept in mind by the most trusting of observers: the number of children in a school, primary or secondary, is the basis not only of staffing and

*My emphasis.
accommodation but also of salaries and of all grants to a local authority. A child then is doubly precious, once as a human soul and once as a unit of attendance.'

By 1932 the honours in the contest lay heavily with the post-primary schools—there was only one separate junior high school with a Third Form and there were no primary 'tops'. Mr Masters' regulations reducing the course from three years to two meant that the post-primary schools would in all cases retain their Third Forms. The New Zealand Educational Institute, which had never been unanimously in favour of reorganisation, immediately asked that further development be postponed pending an improvement in the national finances, 'the establishment of satisfactory conditions in the early stages of learning', and unification of control. A similar request was made by the Secondary Schools Association, mainly on the ground that intermediate education was 'being introduced without a definite philosophy behind it'. During the next few years (which, incidentally, saw the establishment of several separate two-year schools) it became more and more clear that the Secondary Schools Association was right. There were occasions when an outsider might well have applied to the intermediate school debate William James's famous phrase, 'one great, blooming, buzzing confusion'. Moreover, very few people outside the schools themselves had a clear idea of what they were doing. So in 1936 at the suggestion of the
New Zealand Educational Institute the Minister of Education (the Hon. P. Fraser) invited the New Zealand Council for Educational Research to make a survey of the intermediate school system. The Council agreed and asked Dr Beeby, who was then its Director, to undertake the task.

Beeby's report* has already had a marked influence on official policy, on the intermediate schools themselves, and on educational opinion generally, and its effect will probably be felt for some time to come. His general conclusion was that on the average the intermediate schools were giving an education that was fuller, more economical of time and effort, and better adapted to the needs of the adolescent than that given by the ordinary primary schools to children of Forms I and II. But the differences between the two (intermediate and primary) were not as great as might have been expected. A major reason for this had been the vagueness and inconsistency of official policy, and in particular the attempt to combine in one school the two incompatible functions of earlier specialisation and the exploration of aptitudes. Actually there was little exploration and a good deal of early specialisation. The schools had been handicapped also by the demands of the proficiency examination, restrictions concerning time-tables, lack of equipment, difficulties of staffing and unsatisfactory relations with other schools. As these hindrances were at least

partially removable, Beeby based his recommendations not so much on what the schools were as on what they might become.

His major recommendation (supported by the arguments quoted earlier) was that the intermediate school system should be continued and extended. He proposed that the chief function of the intermediate schools in New Zealand should be 'to provide a socially integrative period of schooling for all children passing through the public school system at a point before they diverge along specialized lines. Rightly or wrongly, the primary schools up to Standard IV are concerned chiefly with the teaching of the "tools" of learning: at the post-primary stage specialization begins: it is the chief function of the intermediate school to provide between the two a period of expansive, realistic, and socially integrative education that will give all future citizens a common basis of experience and knowledge.' To this the exploratory function of the intermediate school is made subservient, while the function most strongly emphasised when reorganisation was first undertaken—the earlier beginning of secondary subjects—is not regarded as one that should be imposed universally on intermediate schools. 'Some headmasters,' Beeby says, 'while acknowledging a degree of value in Latin, French and mathematics, might well believe that other studies are of more importance to even the academically bright child of intermediate school age'.
The more detailed proposals of the report cannot be quoted here. But it must be added that the recommendations concerning the types of school that should be established, and the length of their courses, were based on two main principles: first that independent schools are to be preferred to attached schools (for the reason that they offer a greater hope for 'the relaxing of the academic, verbal traditions of education and for the treatment of individuals as individuals'); second, that all children should be allowed to remain at the intermediate school for a third or even part of a fourth year, and that those who do not intend to prolong their schooling for more than a year beyond Form III should be encouraged to stay at the intermediate school for that year.

This brings us to the present position. The extension of the intermediate school system—pretty much, one gathers, along the lines just indicated—is settled government policy, and several large and finely-equipped schools have been built very recently. It would not be correct to say that opposition to reorganisation has disappeared, or even that those who press for intermediate schools in their districts are always profoundly convinced of their educational advantages, but where the impending change is not positively welcomed it is now generally accepted as inevitable. As for the schools themselves they have a surer sense of direction and are no longer worried by the proficiency examination or lack of equipment.
With better conditions than the primary schools and much more freedom than the secondary schools, they have exciting opportunities. It remains to be seen if they will have the insight and imagination to make the most of them. As Beeby's report shows very clearly, intermediate school organisation is not incompatible with the mechanical methods of the educational factory. This, indeed, is the main reason for the lurking suspicion with which reorganisation is still regarded by some educational reformers; it is for the schools to demonstrate more convincingly than has hitherto been possible that any such suspicion is groundless.

In comparison with other countries New Zealand has been both bold and inventive in the way in which she has brought post-primary education to all who have asked for it. She has been less successful in adapting to individual and social needs what she has made so freely available. By lingering lovingly over an idealised picture of the nineteenth-century English secondary school when she was moving so much more rapidly than England in the direction of post-primary education for all, she allowed the grossest maladjustments to develop. Some of these have now been removed. Enough remain to provide ample scope for reforming energy. In the words of the report of the Minister of Education for 1938: 'Schools that are to
cater for the whole population must offer courses that are as rich and varied as are the needs and abilities of the children who enter them: this means generous equipment, more and better-trained teachers, and some system of guidance to help pupils to select the schools and courses that will best cater for their abilities. It means also, if there is to be true equality of opportunity, that, by one method or another, the country child must be given access to the facilities from which he has always tended to be barred by the accident of location. Most important of all, perhaps, it means that the system of administrative control must be such that the whole school system is a unit within which there is free movement.'
IN THE FIELD of higher education the historical principle has been especially active, constantly reinforced as it has been by the importation of university teachers from Great Britain or the appointment to chairs and lectureships of men and women who, though colonial-born, have studied in British universities. The British universities themselves are not all of one pattern, and they have been the homes of many faiths and many causes. Yet there is a British ‘idea’ of a university. It has been stated in general terms by Ernest Barker:

‘The aim of a university is, in the first place, to give the highest and final stage of general education to undergraduate students between the age of 18 and that of 22, partly with a view to preparing them for a specific profession or calling (such as that of engineering or, again, of medicine), but partly, and still more, with a view to preparing them to do work of a better quality, in virtue of the better training they have received, in any profession or calling which they
may subsequently enter. A university fulfils this first aim, not only through the intellectual equipment it provides, but also through the moral quality of the common life which its existence brings into play—a common life of residence, issuing in various forms of spontaneous social activity which serves as a discipline and a stimulus to all upon whom it acts. . . .

'The second aim of a university is to promote and conduct research in the humanities and the various branches of science, partly through its professors and lecturers, and partly through the graduate students whom it attracts, and this with a view both to increasing the sum of human knowledge, and to deepening the current of human thought, so that the university may serve the national community in which it is set (and as far as possible the world at large) as leader and guide in the fields of theology and philosophy, letters and history, politics and economics, science (both pure and applied), and the other interests and activities of the human mind.'*

Most of our university teachers and administrators have had at the back of their minds some such conception as this; and they have taken the view that it implies, among other things, that entrance requirements should be fairly exacting and that a university college, whether residential or non-residential, should be organised in the main for full-time students. There

*Article on universities in Great Britain in The University in the Changing World (1932).
has been a similar carry-over of British ideas concerning the proper standard and the proper scope of university work.

Influential as these ideas have been, they have never found full expression in practice. Of the two aims Barker distinguishes, the first has always very much overshadowed the second. Research has been in the background, although a limited amount, some of it of first-rate importance, has been done; and while some university teachers have been acknowledged intellectual leaders, the impact of the university on the social and cultural life of the community has in general been less marked than might have been expected. Teaching and learning at the undergraduate level have dominated the scene, and that process has been more than in the homelands a matter of syllabus and text-book, lecture and examination. Relatively few New Zealand graduates have had any experience of the ‘common life of residence’ of which Barker speaks; some have never attended a university college even as part-time students. As in all modern universities there has been over the years a steady widening of the range of subjects and courses. Some notion of the scope and diversity of the work at present carried out by the six constituent colleges of the University may be gathered from the fact that degrees are granted in arts, science, law; commerce, medicine, dentistry, architecture, engineering, agriculture, forestry, home science, and music, and diplomas in educa-
tion, public administration, journalism, banking, fine arts, and public health. Developments here have generally though not invariably followed British precedents.

Of the immediate causes of divergence the most important are to be found in the composition of the student body and the nature of our university organisation. Those who have sought higher education in New Zealand have come rarely from well-to-do homes that looked on attendance at a university college as a means of acquiring social and intellectual polish, and frequently from homes with very modest incomes. In any case, the typical New Zealand family has never been as ready as its Scottish counterpart to make heavy sacrifices to put a son or daughter through a university course. The Dominion has met the situation by making it easy for part-time and extra-mural students to obtain degrees.* Lectures have been provided, especially in subjects for arts, law, and commerce degrees, before or after working hours, and there has been a liberal supply of bursaries giving free tuition. The number of scholarships covering living expenses as well as tuition has, by contrast, been relatively limited. The entrance examination, moreover, has never been as formidable a test as the comparable examinations in Great Britain.

The effects of this extensive policy are seen in the

*Incidentally, New Zealand was the first country in the Empire to admit women to university degrees.
mere size of the student body. As early as 1885 Robert Stout could claim that New Zealand had in relation to her population 'as many students receiving university education as any other country in the world'. At the time of the outbreak of the present war she had, proportionately, three times as many university students as England, half as many again as Scotland, twice as many as Australia; only the United States and South Africa surpassed her. Roughly half the students, however, were part-time, and about a tenth extra-mural, while the great majority of full-time students were attending professional and science courses. Thus many departments of the university must cater for a body of students who for the most part have very little leisure, whose motives are urgently vocational, and who are on the average less well-equipped intellectually and educationally than their contemporaries in Britain. Scholastically, this implies one of two things, or a compromise between them: the acceptance of a general level of scholarship lower than in Britain, or the insistence on a standard that only a minority of students can achieve in the circumstances without resort to intensive cramming. There is, indeed, a repetition of the kind of situation brought about at the post-primary stage through the free-place system, with the result that the university is faced with the problem of meeting the needs of students who, while capable of profiting by further education, will never master any of the more exacting
disciplines. In this respect our problems are closer to those of the American state universities than to those of Britain. It is true, of course, that some part-time students achieve a high standard of scholarship, that some take an active part in the corporate life of their college, and that a few miraculously contrive to do both things. But in numbers of cases it is impossible to pretend that what students are acquiring closely approximates a liberal education as traditionally conceived. It is not suggested that the part-time system could, or should, be abolished: Britain herself now makes fairly extensive provision for those who cannot give their full time to university work. What is being emphasised is the tendency of the system to constrict and depersonalise the educational process.

Unhappily, the administrative organisation of the university, and the material conditions under which university teaching has been carried on, have worked strongly in the same direction. From the earliest days of the colony there were men who looked forward to the time when New Zealand would have a university. In Canterbury provision had been made for higher education in the scheme for the college and grammar school contained in the original plan of the settlement, itself largely the work of Christ Church, Oxford, men. But the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge with their residential colleges and tutorial methods of individual instruction did not offer models that could easily be reproduced
in miniature in a pioneer land. Apart from purely physical obstacles, including the cost of such an enterprise, there was the difficulty that traditions so aristocratic and so exclusively Anglican were at no stage acceptable to more than a small minority of the colonists. The Otago Scots, on the other hand, brought with them not merely a reverence for professors but a tradition that lent itself readily to transplantation. The non-residential Scottish universities had for centuries been avenues through which many in relatively poor circumstances had made their way into the ministry or medicine, law or the teaching profession, so that there was scarcely a village without some university connection. The Scots therefore regarded universities as part of the normal pattern of life and were determined to have one as soon as they could. By 1867 when the gold rushes had brought population and comparative prosperity to the South Island, Otago saw no reason for further delay and its university, which it hoped would become a colonial institution, was founded by provincial ordinance two years later. But although New Zealand has borrowed much from Scotland (the lecturing system, for example, is largely Scottish in origin), and has always been influenced in some degree by Oxford and Cambridge (witness the desire to establish halls of residence), her university organisation was actually modelled in the first place on that of the University of London.
The University of London was founded in 1839 as an examining body in order to grant degrees to the students of two London colleges that had been founded some years earlier—University College and King’s College—and such other colleges as might be admitted to affiliation. University College had been founded by a combination of secularists, dissenters, Catholics, and Jews, all of whom were technically excluded from Oxford and Cambridge, and the examining university was the outcome of a long struggle to secure incorporation of the college and the recognition of university education other than that given in the principles of the established Church. When in 1858 examinations and degrees were opened to students of any college or none the university became ‘external’ in the complete sense. The London system of university organisation was adopted in New Zealand in 1874 after a period of acute controversy and tortuous negotiation. The essence of the story is that provincial and denominational rivalries precluded the recognition of any one teaching institution as a colonial university.* Canterbury in particular, which had established its university college in 1873, was not prepared to allow Otago to monopolise the field; and there was the fear that if the University of Otago became a national institution the Presbyterian Church would exercise a dominating influence over higher

*A detailed account is given in J. C. Beaglehole, *The University of New Zealand* (1937).
education. As everyone desired imperial recognition for New Zealand degrees, and as the Crown was naturally unwilling to give charters to two or more universities in so small and recently-founded a colony, some system of federation became inevitable. The University of London provided the model, and the system then established remained unaltered until 1926. The University became a purely examining body under the control of a lay external Senate which exercised wide powers over the teaching of the affiliated colleges.

This compromise was unsatisfactory from the first, and there was so much discontent that as early as 1878 a royal commission was set up to enquire into university affairs. The professors, notably Shand, Black, Macgregor, and Bickerton, attacked the external examination and the Senate’s policy of affiliating secondary schools, seeing in both a threat to true university standards. Macgregor told the commission that ‘the whole system of examination by papers alone will produce the most mischievous effects on the education of this country’. The commission condemned the policy of indiscriminate affiliation, recommended the establishment of university colleges at Auckland and Wellington, and made other proposals that if carried into effect would have greatly improved teaching conditions and given the individual colleges and the individual professors a good deal of liberty. The practical effects were
extremely small. The chill of economic depression was already being felt and there was no enthusiasm for proposals involving the expenditure of money. Auckland, it is true, got its college in 1883, but it was not until 1899 that one was established at Wellington. The Senate’s faith in the virtues of the external examination remained unshaken: it rejected the commission’s recommendation that degree examinations should in future be conducted in New Zealand and adhered to the policy of appointing examiners in Britain.

The enthronement of the external examination combined with the financial difficulties of the colleges produced conditions not dissimilar to those in the primary schools of the period with their large classes, their lack of equipment, and their pre-occupation with measurable results. In comparison with even the poorest of the universities of Great Britain the New Zealand colleges have always been understaffed, and it is only in recent years that their libraries and laboratories have begun to approach overseas standards. It soon came to be understood that a university college was a place to which you went to assimilate from lectures and a few text-books the quantum of information necessary to pass examinations for a degree. As the present Vice-Chancellor of the University has said, perhaps the strongest criticism of the system devised by the act of 1874 is ‘the influence it exerted on the stalwarts who had so
brilliantly shot it to ribbons before the Commission. Macgregor retired to other work, becoming Inspector-General of Hospitals; Bickerton remained faithful to his old love, research, but frustrated in the University, wandered into fields of which his college did not approve and his academic career came to an end; Shand, with his sturdy Scots character, faithfully performed for so long his routine duties under the scheme that he came to approve it; and Black whose temperament was not suited to the drudgery of routine found his interest in other fields of activity. The system proved too strong for them. Inter-college rivalry and provincial jealousy, the lack of libraries, the exclusion from any real part in the judgment of the work of their students, the tendency of some governing bodies to judge university work mainly by examination results, the absence of sabbatical years . . . all tended to stereotype academic methods and standardize interests. The pity of it, because I very much doubt whether at any time since, the university has had a staff more alive to the educational needs of the community, more interested in advanced methods of teaching and more enthusiastic in the discharge of their duties."

The policy of appointing examiners in Great Britain, which has not yet been completely abandoned in principle, deserves some comment. Its adoption in the first place, when university standards were still

*T. A. Hunter, *The University in the First Hundred Years* (1940).
undetermined, is understandable, though it is significant that it was unique to New Zealand. Much more significant was its extraordinary vitality, its capacity to survive a stream of criticism from local university teachers, from visiting educationists from overseas, and even on occasion from the British examiners themselves. In some subjects, at some times, and in some respects, the influence of the overseas examiner has, no doubt, been salutary and even stimulating. It remains true that no country that thought of education in personal terms or that expected its university to make important contributions to a distinctive national culture could have accepted it as more than a temporary expedient. In truth, the system was weak just where its supporters thought it was strong: it did not ensure high standards of scholarship, especially in the subjects for arts degrees. And it lent itself to examiner-beating of a highly-developed order. There is a revealing story, that could easily be paralleled, of an external examiner in economics who was placed in a dilemma by having to set essays on New Zealand economic problems. Having no direct knowledge of those problems he slipped into the habit of setting subjects on which honours dissertations had been presented to him in previous years. This gave him some means of checking facts; but the students, who quickly discovered this habit, had merely to borrow and read the theses of their predecessors in order to achieve remarkably
good passes. During his term this external examiner, to the chagrin of the teachers, gave more first-class honours in his subject than have ever been given before or since. The teachers had not been consulted in his appointment and were powerless to interfere with his results or to communicate with him.*

In the years just before the Great War a very energetic movement for reform took shape. Many influences contributed to it, among them the stirrings in the primary and secondary fields, an extremely thoroughgoing and able criticism of university education in New Zealand by Professor D. Starr Jordan of the Leland Stanford Junior University, California, and the report of the royal commission on the University of London. The upshot was the creation in Wellington in 1910 of a University Reform Association which was led by a group of Victoria University College professors who had the support of discontented colleagues in other centres. The reformers made the charge that 'the University’s disregard of the principles of education had led to carelessness in the appointment of teachers, poor facilities for teaching, the absence of adequate libraries, the neglect of research.' They asked for a larger share of self-government for the colleges, more freedom for the teacher, the abolition of the external examination, better teaching conditions—and for a royal commission on university affairs.

The agitation had some immediate effects, but the reformers had to wait until 1925 for their royal commission. Both the general verdict of the second royal commission—‘that the New Zealand University offers unrivalled facilities for gaining university degrees, but is less successful in providing university education’—and its concrete recommendations bore out the contentions of the Reform Association. One major proposal, that the University should become a federal institution ‘charged with definite responsibility for teaching, but allowing the constituent colleges greater freedom in developing their own curricula and in holding examinations’, was put into partial operation through the New Zealand University Amendment Act of 1926. A year or two before, the first breaches had been made in the external system of examinations, and since then the responsibility for examining has been slowly transferred to the teaching staff. At the time of the outbreak of war there were several subjects in which the setting and examining of papers at all stages were conducted in New Zealand. The war itself, by confronting professors with the choice of agreeing on a scheme of internal examination or having their students’ papers examined in Australia, has accelerated the trend. Agreement on a scheme of examining internal to New Zealand is not, however, by any means a complete solution of the problem. To teach according to a syllabus common to three other colleges, and try to reach an understanding
on the details of examining and standards may be a
difficult and distracting process. At its worst it may
mean, as one university teacher has recently com-
plained, that a professor makes ‘crippling compro-
mises with colleagues whose approaches to questions
differ from his own as widely and fundamentally as
they are equally justifiable and legitimate’, while his
students are faced with examination papers consisting
of ‘a piebald mosaic of unrelated questions, which
betray no common intention. . . .’ As a partial
remedy, the University has decided that from 1941
each college will, in all subjects for B.A. and B.Sc.,
take over full responsibility for the examination of
its Stage I students. The centennial year therefore
found the University moving rapidly away from a
system that had stood firm against criticism for half
a century and even now is stoutly defended in some
quarters.

Directly or indirectly the university colleges are
dependent on the State for a considerable part of their
revenue. There have been few large endowments
from private sources. University spokesmen have
never had any difficulty in showing that in comparison
with Britain for instance, government grants have
been small, and they have often gone on to argue
that this is symptomatic of indifference on the part
of governments and the community to the claims of
higher education. There is truth in this contention,
but it may be doubted if the position is precisely as
is sometimes suggested, particularly when comparisons are made with the treatment given to other branches of the education service. A university that forms part of a more-or-less democratised education system stands in a different relation to primary and post-primary schools from one in which university education is still largely a class privilege. In the former case good teaching conditions and everything that makes for professional alertness are no less important in the infant room than in the university, and the onus is on any section of the service that claims special rights and privileges to show that they are strictly relevant to the special functions it undertakes to perform. Actually there is no branch of the service that has not at one time or another seen itself in the role of Cinderella, and it is hard to think of instances in which the imperative needs of the university have been sacrificed to the less imperative needs of, let us say, the primary schools. At all events, as a result of the liberal financial policy of the present government, coupled with the assistance of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which made grants for university libraries and gave the colleges art and music sets, many of the outstanding disabilities of which the colleges complained have been removed during the past few years.

The development of the university curriculum, and of its methods of teaching, has been in line with the process of differential adaptation described in the first
chapter of this book. The need for change was felt first in connection with those studies that had an obvious bearing on the practical affairs of life. Thus in 1868 we find Macandrew, the Superintendent of Otago, urging the newly-formed University Council to make provision not only for classical and metaphysical studies, but also for a school of mines and of agricultural chemistry. In the same way the natural scientists among the early professors were quick to realise not only the special opportunities New Zealand offered for research but also the need for advanced technical training definitely related to the colony's basic industries. It is significant too that in making early provision for degrees in science New Zealand was well abreast of movements abroad. Nor can it be said that she was slow to establish special schools for the training of professionals, doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, and the rest. On the contrary the rivalry between the four main centres has often resulted not only in duplication of facilities and dispersion of resources that elementary common sense would have concentrated, but also in hasty and ill-conceived action designed to forestall possible moves on the part of other colleges.

By contrast with this concern about practical necessities neither the community nor, with some exceptions, the University itself was sensitive to the cultural realities of its environment and their implications for higher education. Here the emphasis fell
heavily on the transmission of culture rather than on its re-creation, the founders of the University assuming that the cultural needs of the New Zealand student would best be met through the traditional disciplines treated in the traditional way. Some there were who believed that it was a function of the university to bring critical intelligence and a sense of values to bear on the colonial scene, but their ideas found little expression in practice. A great opportunity to make the University a centre for Polynesian studies was missed, and local history and local literature received scant attention. In the same way it has only gradually been realised that a body of students who come, as many New Zealand students have, from bookless and art-starved homes, present an entirely different educational problem from that which faces Oxford and Cambridge. An interest in things of the mind has to be created. There is a special need for lively teaching, for opportunity for discussion, for a scheme of education that will show the linkages between text-book knowledge and the student's own experience. A conception of teaching that does not go beyond the dictation of notes and the correction of exercises is quite inappropriate. So much is now generally recognised, but in comparison with the American colleges, which have just our problem, we have been much more inclined to assume trustfully that what we teach really functions in the life of the student and, quite apart from practical difficulties, much less inclined to
experiment in method. The neglect, until recently, of all the arts with the single exception of language, is also symptomatic. Here again the Americans were well ahead of us and it is partly through their influence that we are coming to see that the arts have an essential place in general education at the university stage. As for the community, its cultural conservatism has been shown most clearly in its attitude towards academic freedom, one of the few British traditions it has always been inclined to suspect. Indeed, university life in New Zealand has suffered more from lack of stimulation than from the material difficulties which have so often been chronicled and deplored.

The multiplication of professional and technical schools within the university is common to universities elsewhere and especially to those in the 'new' countries. It calls forth the criticism that the more the university changes the more it becomes 'a technical school in a top hat'. Everything depends on what the critic implies. To despise useful technical skill is perverse; to adhere to rigid conceptions of professions that are learned and professions that are not is to ignore modern scientific and social developments;* to set the

*Kandel in Education for Complete Living (1938), p. 449, has a pointed comment on Flexner, who in his Universities, American, English, German, attacked the vocationalism of some of the American universities. He asks 'whether the study of city planning, economic organization and modes of everyday living in Egypt, Athens, or Rome can be considered worthy of academic study, while research in similar problems in our own day should be left outside the scope of a university curriculum. Can a case be made out . . . for the thesis that aspects of life in the past are the proper sphere of academic and scholarly research, while the study of the same subjects that are pressing for solution at the present time should be relegated to technical and other institutions?'
vocational and cultural in eternal opposition is to carry over the philosophy of a class-stratified society; to deprecate interest in the present is to overlook the secret of the great periods in university history. In so far as a new country does not make these mistakes it has cause to congratulate itself. It is hard to see that a university necessarily sells its soul by extending the range of its professional and technical work. The logic of democracy, it might be argued, is to regard the extension as a chance to bring something of the university spirit into spheres that have hitherto had little of it. Yet there is a difference that is profound enough between the skilled functionary and the educated man; and the danger comes quite as much from an unbalanced specialisation that has invaded the whole field of university studies as from the pressure of a narrow utilitarianism.

The modern university beies its name. It has become a place of air-tight specialisms in which the student learns something from this teacher, something from that and must tie it all up as best he can. The old uniform classico-mathematical curriculum had at least the advantage that it created a common universe of discourse; the learned world of to-day is a Babel, and the whole idea of the university as a centre of co-operative intellectual effort is in danger of being lost. During the last twenty years or so there has been in many countries a strong movement towards integration. It has been increasingly recognised that
the specialist who does not understand the bearing of his own field of study on the general social and intellectual life of his time is not merely deficient as a professional, but also incapable of the 'continuous and critical self-adjustment' the modern citizen is called upon to make. One approach to a solution is through common introductory survey courses in contemporary civilisation, the sciences, and the humanities; another is through a reshaping of professional courses with the object of bringing out the broader philosophical and social bearings of the special field of study. There have been moves in New Zealand in both directions, but no university teacher who can see over the top of his own departmental cubicle regards the problem as even partially solved.

Returning to the main theme, one may summarise by saying that the struggle of the immediate future lies between those who want the University to conform more closely to the British pattern and those who would let geography push it into a shape somewhat similar to that of the American state university. There is a good deal of common ground. It is agreed, for example, that the number of full-time students should, if possible, be increased, and that degrees and diplomas should not be cheapened. The first group, however, if they had their way, would stiffen up entrance requirements very considerably, put a stop to extensions of the curriculum on the technical side, and even relegate to other institutions some of the
work the university colleges are now doing. The second group would apply to the University the same philosophy that underlies the abolition of the proficiency examination and the reorganisation of post-primary education. They agree that the first and essential duty of a university is to scholarship and research, but think it natural and desirable that in a country like ours the university should make itself responsible for functions of a wider and less academic kind. This implies the abandonment of the idea that the university exists to serve a small aristocracy of brains, and there are some who would admit anyone who has completed a post-primary course. Such a policy would force the university to revise its conception of a liberal education for a large number of its students. A system that encourages students to embark on courses that are far too advanced for them is in the highest degree wasteful from any point of view, and if entrance standards were further relaxed while the curriculum remained the same the position would become intolerable. The only possible solution would be through further differentiation of the curriculum (which would probably involve new relationships with the technical schools and with adult education) and the development of a system of educational guidance and selection within the University itself.
The history of organised non-vocational adult education is older than that of the University.* In the early days of the settlements there were an astonishing number of Athenaeums, Mechanics' Institutes, and Scientific and Mutual Improvement Societies. Most of them were founded by the men of 'light and leading', partly because they wanted them for themselves, partly because they shared the belief of their class in the corrective influence of education among the masses, but in some instances the initiative came from the workers. The voice of the Chartists can be heard in the Manifesto of the Wellington Working Men's Association, published in 1841. 'It has been deemed advisable', says the Manifesto, 'to establish a society among the working classes for the purpose of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge by means of a library, discussions, lectures etc. . . . The limited means, and few hours of relaxation at the disposal of mechanics and labourers, wholly precludes them from acquiring or diffusing useful knowledge, excepting during the evening when the jealousy of many employers . . . prevents the poor man improving his social, moral, or intellectual condition. . . .' The general purpose of the Association is said to be that 'of raising the hard-working man in the scale of being, and placing him in that situation among the Lords of the earth, which as a member of the human family

*For some of the facts in this section I am indebted to an article by H. C. D. Somerset in the Educational Yearbook 1940 and to unpublished material collected by A. B. Thompson.
is his natural inheritance.' With the aid of private subscriptions and grants from the provincial govern-
ments, it was usual to erect a building, establish a library and arrange for lectures. In the bigger centres there was no lack of talent and the lectures covered almost every subject under the sun. By the seventies, however, the movement had lost much of its vigour, the Institutes tending more and more to become merely libraries and Working Men's clubs. As Somerset remarks, it was not until the Workers' Educational Association was established in 1915 that the spirit which animated the early Institutes was revived. The collapse is highly significant. Some of the energy behind the original movement went, it is true, into semi-educational, semi-propagandist activities connected with religion and politics and social reform, but there can be little doubt that the change marked a real diminution in the thirst for education in and for itself. The fact that it coincided with the universalising of schooling helps to explain a good deal in our educational history.

The Workers' Educational Association was founded in England early in the century to meet the demand of the intellectual élite of the working classes for opportunities for intensive study and discussion of subjects such as economics and social history that bore directly on the problem of the emancipation of their fellow workers. The Association worked through tutorial classes committees, that jointly represented
the university and working-class organisations, and that provided classes which aimed at, and frequently achieved, the high standard of university honours in courses continuing over a period of three years. The movement came to New Zealand in 1915 by way of Australia. The English form of organisation was adopted and much of the English philosophy, and for a short time the work of the Association closely approximated that of the parent body. Students enrolled for three-year courses and were required to do written work; socio-economic studies held pride of place; and the classes attracted many of the recognised labour leaders. All three of the recent leaders of the parliamentary Labour party, as well as many others who have represented Labour in Parliament, were at one time or another W.E.A. students.

In England itself it was soon found that this form of adult education was too bookish, too exacting, and too limited in scope to appeal to more than an extremely small proportion of industrial workers, let alone to the rural wage-earning population; and although the tutorial class remains as the hard core of adult education, there has been a remarkable development, both inside and outside of the W. E. A., of less academic activities designed to attract the ordinary citizen. The New Zealand Association was forced to make similar modifications, the more so because the Dominion, with its very much broader educational ladder, possessed relatively fewer natural
students who had been denied access to post-primary and higher education. The three-year tutorial class, with written work, has disappeared and been replaced by one-year courses and short courses. In some of the classes the intellectual level of the discussions is very high, and there is a sense of the importance of ideas that is rarely present among comparable groups of university students, but the Association now caters for large numbers of men and women who have no intention of undertaking prolonged or intensive study. Not unconnected with this was the growing popularity, up to 1930, of literature and drama as compared with the specifically socio-economic studies; since then, as the result of the great depression, the drift to war, and the war itself, there has been a swing back in the other direction.

The W.E.A. has always been 'non-political and non-sectarian', its classes have been open to all, and it has had among its tutors men and women representing very varied points of view. Many of its leaders have, nevertheless, tried very hard to make it a workers' movement, and up to a point they have succeeded. Contact with the trade unions has never been completely lost, and there have been some classes in which wage-earners have predominated. The effort has been justified if only for the reason that it has saved the movement from degenerating into genteelism. Nevertheless, the achievement has fallen a good deal short of what was hoped. There
are many contributing factors, among them the suspicion with which the W.E.A. has often been regarded on the extreme Left as well as on the Right, the absorption of the more active-minded trade unionists in union and political affairs, the indifference of many among the rank-and-file to any form of workers' education, and the grave difficulty the academically-trained tutor has in putting himself inside the skin of the manual worker. The fact that so many of the keenest of the W.E.A. worker-students have not been colonial-born cannot be without significance.* It means, perhaps, that difficult as conditions for wage-earners in New Zealand have often been, they have rarely been bad enough to create the sense of personal deprivation and social injustice that was the driving force behind the English movement. In short, adult education has been affected, together with the rest of the education system, by the fact that we have a petty bourgeoisie rather than a working class.

A voluntary organisation that offers nothing to material ambition must adapt itself or perish; and the New Zealand W. E. A. has had in addition to adjust its ideal of a nation-wide service to the exigencies of inadequate and uncertain finances. These hard necessities, combined with the ability and enthusiasm of those who have worked for it, have made the W.E.A.

*I have no figures on this point; but the observation is based on a fairly extensive acquaintance with the W.E.A.
one of the most flexible, experimental, and self-critical of all our educational agencies. This has been particularly evident in the Association's country work. The Canterbury centre, for example, evolved in 1926 what has come to be known as the 'box scheme'. Each 'box' contained copies of a lecture, some illustrative material, or material for simple experiments, and formed one of a series of twelve or twenty-four covering such subjects as 'Music, Art and Literature', 'Drama and Opera', 'Practical Psychology', etc. The boxes were made available to any group that undertook to appoint a leader and meet regularly. The scheme made possible a wide spread of material through districts which could be only rarely visited by a tutor, and it had the advantage of demanding the active participation of the students themselves. Meanwhile there was experimentation in other districts with correspondence course techniques, the general object being not so much to convey information as to stimulate thought and discussion and encourage further reading. Through such methods, some of which have made their way overseas, much valuable work has been done with very limited resources.

In addition to the W.E.A., which exists wholly and solely for the purpose of adult education, there are a bewildering number of other agencies and organisations which are directly or indirectly concerned with it. These range from learned societies to bodies with but the merest tincture of educational purpose.
Especially remarkable has been the expansion of organised activities for country women through the efforts of the Women’s Institutes and the Women’s Division of the Farmers’ Union. The development of the work of these two bodies shows in a very interesting way how a demand for intellectual fare can grow out of pursuits that are at first almost purely social, practical, and recreative. Brought together by the need for companionship and the desire to work in co-operation for various causes of common interest, the groups went on to develop studies and activities connected with the domestic arts. They are now asking—or were, before much of their energy was diverted into war work—for courses in drama, world affairs, art, and elementary science. Working in co-operation with these and other groups, is the home science extension service of the School of Home Science of the University of Otago and a smaller scheme of a similar nature run from Victoria University College. Another point of interest is that the beneficent activities of the Country Library Service are an off-shoot of the adult education movement. They had their origin in the Canterbury Adult Rural Scheme, established some years ago with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

A healthy adult education movement can never be a tidy growth, but there is no point in untidiness that has no relation to educational needs or that gets in the way of further expansion. For various reasons
there has been in New Zealand some overlapping of effort and much lack of co-ordination. In part we have to thank our administrative system: if, as in England, the local education authorities had been charged with a responsibility for education at all stages we might have escaped some of our present difficulties. This chapter can therefore fittingly conclude with reference to two moves towards co-ordination—one local, the other central.

In 1938 H. C. D. Somerset and his wife, whose work in the field of adult education had already attracted attention both here and abroad, were appointed, on the initiative of the Education Department, to the Feilding Agricultural High School for the purpose of co-ordinating and developing the adult education activities of the town and the surrounding district. As a result there is growing up a 'Community Centre for Further Education and Recreation'. Somerset has indicated his approach in these words: 'The educational work has been built on a preliminary survey of the needs of the town and has been quite unhindered by any preconceived ideas about adult education. An attempt is being made to know the people first of all and to make conscious their unexpressed desires for learning. Classes develop only after a great deal of individual work has been done by the two full-time tutors.' Classes and study groups have been formed in child psychology for mothers of pre-school children (a two-day nursery class is run
every week for demonstration purposes); in the
drama; in physical education; in foreign languages;
and in a variety of other subjects ranging from home
decoration to world affairs. The work is still in some
respects at the experimental stage, but it is possible
that it will have a far-reaching influence on future
developments.

In the same year that this local experiment was
begun the government made provision for a National
Council of Adult Education, consisting of the
Directors of Education and Broadcasting, two repre-
sentatives of the Senate of the University of New
Zealand, one representative of the W.E.A., and two
nominees of the Minister of Education, and also for
the creation of local Adult Education Advisory
Committees in each of the four university college
districts. Here also it is too early to judge of the
probable effects of the move. Its immediate signif-
icance lies in the clear evidence it provides of the
interest of the State in the orderly development of
adult education on a national scale.
NEW ZEALAND can claim to have built up during her first hundred years one of the most democratic school systems in the world. If she has not obliterated what have been called ‘the vulgar irrelevances of class inequality and economic pressure’, she has certainly got rid of the worst of them. Except in the minds of a very small minority, public education has long ceased to be regarded as an inferior substitute for the real thing; and nobody finds himself handicapped in adult life because he has attended a school maintained out of public funds. Parental income is still one of the main factors determining the amount of schooling a child receives, and a democracy cannot rest satisfied so long as some children leave school for good at thirteen or fourteen and so long as the professions requiring prolonged full-time training at the university are largely recruited from a restricted social group that has no monopoly of talent. Nevertheless, the policy of easy access to post-primary and higher education combined
with the comparative evenness of the distribution of
the national income results in a fairly close approxi-
mation to real equality of educational opportunity.
The Dominion has also made a very resolute attempt
to even up educational opportunities as between town
and country: the consolidation of schools, transport
services, boarding bursaries, and the correspondence
school are only parts of an elaborate organisation
designed to achieve this end. Few countries, if any,
have done more to place rural and urban children
on the same footing? To this it should be added that
our education system has known comparatively little
of the grosser forms of inefficiency.? One result of all
this is that the general level of knowledge in New
Zealand is unusually high; another that we have
largely broken down the barriers of speech that
traditionally separated the educated minority from the
uneducated mass.

If these are our greatest virtues, our greatest vice
has been the tendency to mechanise and externalise
the educational process, to sacrifice the imponderables
of spirit and personality to lesser things. Our history
bristles with examples at every stage from the primary
school to the university. The root of the trouble has
been that the demand for an open road for talents
has not been linked in the public mind with any clear
and compelling idea of the civilising function of
education. As a people, we have been sufficiently
democratic to make schooling pretty freely available,
but insufficiently enlightened to insist on, and pay for, a ‘complete and generous education’. Individualism, pioneer concern with tangible results, and the colonial habit of regarding culture as something to be merely ‘preserved’ have all driven the one way. The consequence is that education in New Zealand has, on the whole, probably been thinner in quality, and less adventurous in spirit, than in the homeland. Writing in 1930, J. B. Condliffe concluded that a ‘lack of experiment, of freshness, of variety of approach and of creative thought’ in education had resulted in a stereotyped uniformity of citizenship and a dearth of initiative and leadership, and turned New Zealand into ‘the paths of satisfied mediocrity and provincialism’. Condliffe almost certainly over-estimates the influence of formal schooling, which is only one of the many experiences that shape the mind and temper of a nation; otherwise it is impossible to dissent very much from his judgment.

Against this background, the developments of the past five years take on the appearance of a renaissance. Educational problems are being tackled with a new confidence in our power to work out our own salvation, and the lack of stimulation from which education in New Zealand has suffered so much has never been less evident. Not since the days of Hogben has there been a comparable effort to change the orientation of the schools; and at no previous time has there been such a crop of new ventures. The movement
has to contend on the one hand with the formal traditions that are still deep-seated in the public and professional mind and on the other with sentimentalised perversions of its real aims. What direction it will ultimately take, whether it will slacken or gather pace, whether its effects will be fundamental or superficial, what forces will help or hinder it—these are questions for the educational historian of the future.
THE serious student should refer to the *Bibliography of New Zealand Education* compiled by Mary Mules and A. G. Butchers and published in 1936 by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. This is an exhaustive bibliography running to eighty-four pages and covering official and unofficial publications on every aspect of New Zealand education. At the time of its appearance the only really comprehensive studies were Dr Butchers' two books, *Young New Zealand*, which covers the period up to the passing of the act of 1877, and *Education in New Zealand*, which carries on the story until 1929. These are still standard works, which have been drawn on in this and other subsequent surveys. Since 1936, however, the Council for Educational Research has published a number of reports and studies which have added considerably to our knowledge of the education system. Some of these have been referred to in the text—J. C. Beaglehole's *The University of New Zealand*, Leicester Webb's *The Control of Education in New Zealand*, H. C. D. Somerset's *Littledene*, C. E. Beeby's *The Inter-
mediate Schools of New Zealand, J. E. Strachan's The School Looks at Life, and John Nicol's The Technical Schools of New Zealand. Other recent studies of importance are to be found in volumes of the English Year Book of Education and the American Educational Yearbook.
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