

1879-80.

VICTORIA.

CONFERENCE OF BOARDS OF ADVICE.

RETURN to an Order of the *Legislative Assembly*,
Dated 28th October 1879, for—

THE REPORT of the Conference of Boards of Advice of State Schools.

(*Mr. Carter.*)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 22nd January 1880.

RESOLUTIONS PROPOSED AND CARRIED AT THE LATE CONFERENCE OF BOARDS OF ADVICE, HELD IN TOWN HALL, MELBOURNE, 2ND, 3RD, 4TH, AND 5TH SEPTEMBER 1879.

1. That, in the opinion of this conference, all communications from teachers on the subject of appointment and promotion, school management and discipline, and the matters connected with their professional duties, should be made direct to the Secretary of the Education Department, but all communications on the subjects mentioned in clauses 14 and 15 of the Education Act, be made to the correspondents of the Boards of Advice; and that the Minister of Education be requested to make departmental regulations to this effect.

2. That in the face of the present financial condition of the country, and the requirements of new schools, and fencing in school grounds in the country districts, this conference recommends that shelter be afforded to the children by means of tree planting, &c., instead of erecting regular shelter sheds.

3. That every member of a Board of Advice ought to visit some school in his district at least once in every quarter, and record his visit in the roll book, and also attend at least two-thirds of the meetings of the Board to which he belongs, failing in either of which duties, his seat to become vacant.

4. That some scheme to reward scholarship and merit in girls attending State schools is desirable, as the complement of the present system of exhibitions from State schools to superior schools is now confined to boys only.

5. That provision should be made in the department's programme of instruction to teach "morals and manners," by enforcing habits of personal cleanliness, neatness in dress, and obedience to parents, and by telling simple stories to illustrate the virtue of honesty, truthfulness, and kindness.

6. (*a.*) That in order to simplify the enforcement of compulsory education, provision be made for the registration of schools, other than State, and for the furnishing of quarterly returns by the proprietor, principal, head teacher, or principal teacher of every such school, showing the name, sex, age last birthday, residence, and number of schoolday's attendance of each child who attended school during the preceding quarter.

(*b.*) That, in the opinion of this conference, regulations should be framed for the purpose of reducing to a minimum the number of transfers of children from one State school to another.

(*c.*) That in framing these regulations a provision should be inserted that all children, on being transferred from one State school to another, should be supplied with a certificate under the hand of the head teacher of the school which he last attended, specifying the number of attendances during the past and current quarters, and class. And it shall be the duty of the head teacher of the school to which he is transferred to file the said certificate, or a duplicate thereof, to be obtained by him direct.

(*d.*) That urgent need exists that some provision should be made to meet the case of those children who do not attend any school, either owing to their parents' indifference, neglect, or their professed inability to control them.

7. That under the existing regulations, night schools have not been a success, and ought either to be subjected to a radical change, or abolished altogether.

8. That in the opinion of this conference the entire control of all truant officers should rest with the local Boards of Advice.

9. That all prosecutions for non-attendance should be under the direction of Boards of Advice, and that an effort be made to induce magistrates on the bench to inflict adequate fines in gross cases.

10. That all fines received be paid into a fund, to be placed at the disposal of the local Boards of Advice.

11. That, in the opinion of this conference, truant officers should have power to arrest a confirmed truant, or a child who will not answer their enquiries, and to take such a child to a State school, or to his or her parents' residence, or any other place, for the purpose of ascertaining the child's name, and who is responsible that such child should attend school.

12. It being desirable that the people should have faith in the ability and honesty of all teachers employed by the State, this conference is of opinion that the Minister of Education should take steps to insure that the teachers of extra subjects in State schools have a certified qualification.

13. That, in the opinion of this conference, the recent regulations issued by the Minister of Education, requiring the head teachers of State schools to act as managers of the penny banks, is impolitic on economic and public grounds, and this conference respectfully recommends to the attention of the Minister and the Government the advisability of making use of the services of the postmasters throughout the colony as managers of the State Schools Penny Savings Banks.

14. That in view of the increasing numbers of children under the school age who are employed in factories, and other commercial pursuits, this conference recommends to the attention of the Minister of Education the necessity of the Government amending the Education Act, by the addition of a clause requiring all employers of juveniles within the school ages to keep a register of the age, name, and address of such employes, and the number of hours employed. The said register to be open at all times to the inspection of the Boards of Advice and the truant officers of the district; and any one neglecting to comply with the provisions of the Act, as hereinbefore stated, shall be liable to a penalty of Twenty shillings, and not exceeding Five pounds for every additional breach of the Act. It shall further be compulsory for all juveniles employed under the Manufacturer's Act, to show certificates from their school teachers that they have been in regular attendance at some day or night school, as required by law.

15. That this conference deems it wise to have half-time schools brought within the meaning of the Act relative to the compulsory clause, as at present it is unworkable.

16. That it be compulsory on every parent or guardian to register his or her children on their attaining the age of six years, and that arrangements be made for keeping such registers.

17. That this conference recommends that singing and drawing masters be appointed to country schools, when it can be so arranged that they will occupy the whole time of such masters.

The two following resolutions were proposed and carried on the subject of religious instruction to be given in State schools :—

18. (a.) That this conference views with anxiety the hostile attitude shown by certain sections of the community towards the Education Act, and desires to impress on all Boards of Advice, and the people generally, the necessity of preserving the present Act to the country, and of opposing any special grant of money to any religious denomination for education.

(b.) That, in the opinion of this conference, the present Education Act should be maintained in its integrity, and that the four consecutive hours devoted to secular teaching, be not interfered with, but that it is highly desirable that Boards of Advice should, as a rule, grant their consent, on proper application, for the use of the schoolrooms for religious instruction after school hours, and after the children are dismissed.

19. That, in the opinion of this conference, it is desirable that an annual conference of Boards of Advice should be held in Melbourne.

20. That a council, consisting of members of the conference, be formed, and that the functions of the council be as follows :—

1. To lay before the Minister of Education the resolutions adopted by the conference.
2. To give full effect, by all such means as it may deem advisable and necessary, to the said resolutions.
3. That such council consist of the following gentlemen :—

Messrs. J. M. Templeton, Metropolitan.	Messrs. E. D. Heather, E. Hill.
W. H. Leonard, Carlton.	E. King, Carlton.
I. W. Ball, W. Melbourne.	T. Rowe, Fitzroy.
J. E. Stewart, Prahran.	— Saunders, St. Kilda.

(Signed) W. HOWARD LEONARD,
Hon. Sec. to Conference.

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