ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSIONERS; THIRD AND FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS; MEMORANDUM BY THE ACTING CHAIRMAN; AND MEMORANDUM BY THOSE COMMISSIONERS WHO HAVE NOT SIGNED THE REPORT.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

By Authority:
JOHN PERES, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.
Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen.
Defender of the Faith:

To our trusty and well-beloved the Honorable Sir Archibald Michie, a Member of the Executive Council of our Colony of Victoria, one of our Council learned in the Law, Knight Commander of our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; the Honorable John MacGregor, J.P., a Member of the Executive Council of our said Colony; Cornwallis Job Ham, Esq., J.P., Mayor of our City of Melbourne; John Warrington Rogers, Esq., one of our Council learned in the Law; Frederick McCoy, Esq., P.O.S., a Professor of the University of Melbourne; William Henry Archib, Esq., J.P.; William Henry Cutts, Esq., M.D., J.P.; Herbert James Henry, Esq., J.P.; Romond Krogh, Esq., J.P.; Henry Nicholas Lochman, Esq., J.P.; George Meares, Esq., J.P.; John Montgomery Templeton, Esq., J.P.; Duncan Love, Esq.; Francis Emerson, Esq., and William Patterson, Esq.

GREETING—

Whereas the Governor of our Colony of Victoria, with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, in view of the yearly increase of expenditure necessitated by the extension of the existing system of Public Instruction, and, further, in view of the alleged grievances of a portion of the population, has deemed it expedient that a Royal Commission should forthwith be set up to inquire into and report upon the whole administration, organization, and general condition of that system, with the object of ascertaining its deficiencies, improving its working, and, while retaining its efficiency, providing the most economic mode of further extending its operation: Now know ye that we, reposing great trust and confidence in your zeal, learning, and ability, have authorized and appointed, and by these presents do authorize and appoint you, the said Sir Archibald Michie, John MacGregor, Cornwallis Job Ham, John Warrington Rogers, Frederick McCoy, William Henry Archib, William Henry Cutts, Herbert James Henry, Romond Krogh, Henry Nicholas Lochman, George Meares, John Montgomery Templeton, Duncan Love, Francis Emerson, and William Patterson, to be our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid: And we do by these present give and grant unto you, or any five or more of you, full power and authority to call before you such person or persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information upon the subject of this our Commission, and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever: And we will command and by these presents ordain that this our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you our said Commissioners, or any five or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment: And we do hereby appoint you the said Sir Archibald Michie to be the Chairman of this our Commission: And for your assistance in the due execution of this our Commission we do hereby appoint Alexander Grant McIntyre, Esquire, Barrister-at-Law, to be Secretary to you our Commissioners, and to attend you, and his services we require you to use from time to time as occasion may require: And lastly, we direct that you do work with as little delay as possible report to us under your hands and seal your opinions resulting from the said inquiry: In testimony whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent, and the seal of our said Colony to be hereunto affixed.

Weils our right trusty and entirely beloved cousin and counsellor the Most Honorable George Augustus Constantine, Marquess of Normandy, Earl of Mulgrave, Viscount Normandy, and Baron Mulgrave of Mulgrave, all in the County of York; in the Peerage of the United Kingdom; and Baron Mulgrave of New Ross, in the County of Waterford, in the Peerage of Ireland; a Member of our Most Honorable Privy Council; Knight Grand Cross of our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over our Colony of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c., &c., &c.; at Melbourne, this fifteenth day of November in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and eighty-four, and in the forty-fifth year of our reign.

By His Excellency's Command,

Bryan O'Lochlen.

[Signature]

L.B.

No. 5116.

Chief Secretary's Office,

Melbourne, 8th December, 1881.

I have the honour to inform you that the Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint you as Chairman of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the system of Public Instruction of this colony, in the place of Sir Archibald Michie, who has resigned the position. I beg to also forward the Commission, under the hand of His Excellency, in which the subject of inquiry is defined.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

T. R. Wilson.

John Warrington Rogers, Esq., Q.C.,
22 Temple Court.
SIR,

Lindfield House, Hobart, June 16, 1884.

I have the honour, as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Education, to address Your Excellency in reference to the termination of the labours of the Commission.

Before leaving Melbourne in January last to assume the duties, for a time, of Acting Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Tasmania, I prepared at the request of my brother Commissioners, and submitted to their consideration, a draft final Report, exhaustive of the whole subject committed to the Commission, and I requested Mr. Commissioner Templeton to superintend the financial business of the Commission, which he consented to do. I also suggested to the Commissioners that they should select one of the Commissioners to preside at their meetings in my absence during their deliberations upon the draft Report.

I informed His Excellency Lord Normanby, and also the Hon. the Chief Secretary, of the course which I had taken.

The Commissioners at a subsequent meeting elected Mr. Commissioner Templeton to preside in my absence.

The Commissioners have held deliberations, extending over some months, upon the draft Report so prepared by me, and a final Report was lately adopted by a majority of those of the Commissioners who were present at a meeting duly convened.

I was unable to be present at those deliberations, and they were presided over by Mr. Commissioner Templeton. Copies of the alterations made in my draft Report were duly forwarded to me.

I regret that the Report as adopted is so opposed in principle to the conclusions at which I have arrived upon what, in my opinion, is the most important branch of the inquiry, namely, the question of Religion in relation to Education, including, as it does, the question of the “alleged grievance of a portion of the population,” that I am unable to concur in or to sign the Report, and have therefore felt it to be my duty to prepare and to present a separate Report.

Although unable to sign the Report, in consequence of my disagreeing with it upon a question of principle, I have considered that it would be my duty, as Chairman appointed by the Crown, myself to transmit it to Your Excellency as the Report of the Commission.

I therefore wrote to inform the Secretary to the Commission that those Commissioners who wished to do so should be requested to sign the Report so adopted at the meeting of the Commission before referred to, and that those Commissioners, of whom I am given to understand there are several, who differ in principle upon the question of Religion in relation to Education should have the opportunity afforded to them of subscribing such memoranda to the Report as should express whatever views they may entertain as derived from the evidence taken before the Commission.

I further informed the Secretary that when the Report had been signed by such Commissioners as desired to sign it that I would transmit the Report, together with my separate Report and with the memoranda of such Commissioners as dissented from the Report, to Your Excellency.

I regret, however, to have to state that Mr. Commissioner Templeton differs from me as to the mode of presenting the Report, separate Report, and memoranda.

Mr. Commissioner Templeton claims to be entitled, in my absence, to the entire carriage of the Commission, but has expressed his willingness to “concede” the point to me that I should forward the Report if I consider it my specific duty to do so; coupled, however, with the condition that I should forward the Report “through” him “and through a Minister of the Crown.”

I cannot concede to Mr. Commissioner Templeton the right to affix any condition to his recognition of my position as Chairman of the Commission, nor do I consider that the double filtration which he proposes would be right or desirable.
As Chairman appointed by the Crown, it is my duty to transmit the Report, my separate Report, and any memoranda of Commissioners who may dissent from the Report to Your Excellency.

That duty may be discharged either by the transmission of the documents to the Hon. the Chief Secretary, in order that he may hand them to Your Excellency, or by direct transmission to Your Excellency.

The second Report of the Commission was transmitted by me, as Chairman, direct to the late Governor, Lord Normanby, and that is the course which I should have wished to adopt with the final Report in the transmission of it by me, as Chairman, to Your Excellency, as Governor.

I cannot, however, very well at the present time leave this colony for Melbourne to reassume in person the direction of closing the business of the Commission. I should therefore have to do so by written instructions to the Secretary of the Commission.

I am very desirous not to delay the presentation of the Report, and I think that it would be very undesirable to give written instructions to the Secretary to adopt any course which would be opposed to the views of Mr. Commissioner Templeton, who has presided during my absence over the deliberations of the Commissioners.

I have determined, therefore, that, under all the circumstances, the best mode of discharging my duty to the Crown is, that I should transmit direct to Your Excellency, which I do by this mail, my separate Report, that I should leave it to Mr. Commissioner Templeton himself to forward the Report of the Commission to Your Excellency in such mode as he may think fit, when it has been signed by those of the Commissioners who agree with it, and when those Commissioners who dissent from it have had the opportunity, which I shall assume Mr. Commissioner Templeton will be certain to afford to them, of appending to the Report their views, in order that the conclusions at which they have arrived upon the inquiry submitted to the Commission may be conveyed to Your Excellency equally with those of the Commissioners who may sign the Report.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant,

J. WARRINGTON ROGERS,
Chairman of the Royal Commission on Education.

To His Excellency
The Governor of Victoria.

Sir,

Lindfield House, Hobart, June 16, 1884.

In the terms of my letter to Your Excellency of even date, I have the honour to enclose to Your Excellency my separate Report upon the matters referred to the Royal Commission on Education.

I have in ink corrected a mistake at p. 6, in which in error I had used the term "majority of the Commission." I should have said—"majority of the Commissioners present at their deliberations upon the draft Report." I have, therefore, inserted the latter words.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant,

J. WARRINGTON ROGERS,
Chairman of the Royal Commission on Education.

To His Excellency
The Governor of Victoria,
Government House, Melbourne.
TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

THE REPORT OF JOHN WARRINGTON ROGERS, CHAIRMAN
OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

The necessity of accepting a professional engagement in the colony of Tasmania has prevented me from being present at the discussions of Your Excellency's Commissioners upon the Draft Report which, at the desire of the Commissioners, I had, as stated in the Report, prepared and submitted for their consideration before leaving Melbourne.

I regret that the alterations, in reference to Religion in relation to Education and those especially having reference to "the alleged grievance of a portion of the population," made by the majority of the Commissioners present at their deliberations upon the Draft Report, differ so much from what appears to me to be the weight of evidence taken before the Commission, and from the conclusions which I have drawn from that evidence, that I cannot give my assent to the Report, although there are many recommendations in that part of the Report which relates to the general organization and administration of the existing system of Education which were embodied in the Draft Report in which I agree, and which will, if adopted and acted upon, be found to be amendments upon the existing system.

I shall therefore, I think, best discharge the duty imposed upon me under Your Excellency's commission by embodying, in the form of a separate Report, the conclusions at which I have arrived in reference to matters upon which I differ from the views expressed in the Report.

The most careful and unbiased consideration of the evidence taken before the Commission has satisfied me that the defects existing in the present Act, upon the subject of religious teaching, have not been sufficiently dwelt upon in the Report, nor have the claims of the Roman Catholic portion of the population to relief from the grievances of which they complain been dealt with as the evidence required.

The Report wisely and properly enunciates the proposition that "the education of the young, without the inculcation of moral principles based upon the authority of God, is defective and imperfect." It becomes, then, a question of paramount importance to inquire whether the departmental system of education, as established under the existing Act, and for which it appears that the Government expends out of the revenues of the colony a sum exceeding half-a-million of money per annum, provides for the inculcation of those principles "based upon the authority of God," without which, as the Report correctly states, the education of the young is imperfect.

If it does not do so, then the system as at present established is defective and imperfect, and, unless the people are content to expend over half-a-million per annum upon a defective and imperfect system, should be amended. But the question goes far beyond the mere consideration of a great expenditure upon an imperfect result.

The important question is whether, if the present system be persisted in without any amelioration, it will not result in a few years in the production of a population wholly wanting in the distinctive moral and religious character which belongs to a Christian people.

The weight of the evidence taken before the Commission certainly tends to establish the probability of such a result.

The majority of the representatives of various religious denominations examined before the Commission expressed the opinion that the absence of religious instruction from the State schools had a very injurious effect upon the children, and the Protestant Bishop of Melbourne (Dr. Moorhouse) stated that, whilst he approved in general of the provisions of the present Act very heartily, it was defective "in that it did not permit teachers to give elementary undenominational religious instruction, that as a consequence the children sometimes spoke of religion with astounding irreverence, and that the probable future of the secular system would be the demoralization of the children and a very serious interference with the moral tone and dignity of the teachers."
Upon the question of fact, as to whether the children have already deteriorated in moral conduct since the introduction of the present system, the evidence of witnesses outside the Department was that the conduct of the children had already deteriorated. On the other hand, the Government inspectors and teachers who were examined generally expressed a favorable opinion of the general moral conduct of the children; but the departmental evidence, especially that afforded by the officers and records of the Department, greatly impaired the value of that opinion, as the evidence very clearly showed that the attention of the inspectors and teachers is directed almost exclusively to the conduct of the children in reference to their school work, and that there is an indifference to the inculcation of moral principles and to the character of the children, and a disregard to their conduct out of school.

This ought not to be attributed to any want of individual moral tone in the officers or teachers, but rather to the system of the Department, which is shown by the evidence to ignore all responsibility in reference to the children outside of school, and to be wholly directed to producing a certain amount of intellectual sharpness, and the acquisition of a fixed amount of secular knowledge.

It becomes, then, necessary to see whether the cause of this want of attention to the moral conduct of the children is in the Act itself or in the administration.

It seems to me that the cause must be sought in the Act itself, by which the Department is guided in its administration.

The twelfth section of the Act is imperative as to the strictly secular character of instruction to be given, and in its prohibition of any religious instruction by the teacher in school buildings—"In every State school secular instruction only shall be given, and no teacher shall give any other than secular instruction in any State-school buildings"—(Sec. 12).

If this enactment were strictly followed, then were any State-school teacher to instil into the minds of his pupils "moral principles based upon the authority of God" it might certainly be contended that he was guilty of a violation of the letter of the law.

This consideration may possibly have been the reason which induced a late Minister of Public Instruction to eliminate from the reading-books (as stated in the evidence, upon the application of a small anti-Christian section of the community) all the passages having references to Christianity, an elimination of Christian precepts which, as stated by the Protestant Bishop of Melbourne in his evidence, rendered the religious teaching which was left in the books imperfect, "because it, in fact, abandoned the Christian religion for a form of religious teaching common to Buddhists, Mahomedans, Christians, and Theists."

This consideration may also have weighed with those teachers, and there were many of them who stated in their evidence that they used the Theistic religious passages which remained in the books for the purpose of teaching the art of reading, and not for the inculcation of religious sentiments.

Those teachers would appear to have been more logical than the Minister of Instruction, who, when he excised the Christian passages from the books, should, to have acted consistently, have at the same time removed also those passages which teach a mere Theistic religion as distinct from Christianity. By eliminating Christianity, and leaving mere Theistic passages, the only inference which could fairly be drawn would be, that whilst State aid was by the Act withheld from the Christian religion, the aid of the State might be afforded to the inculcation of religion so long as it was not Christian. Two of the Protestant witnesses examined adverted to this point very plainly, the one stating that "he found that the name of Christ was as some evil taint taken from the books," another stating "no one said that there was no religion in the books, but every bit of Christianity was taken out."

There is no doubt, also, that the construction which many have put upon the section referred to, as a direct prohibition to the teaching of religion in State-school buildings, produced the difficulties which, until very recently, were thrown in the way of the use of State-school buildings for the purpose of voluntary religious instruction.

It must be equally clear that as one Minister of the Crown was able, of his own mere will, to eliminate from the school-books all references to Christianity, so another Minister might at any moment cause to be expunged all references to religious sentiments, however vague in character, which remain in the books.

The evidence upon this branch of the subject certainly shows that there exists in the minds of a very large proportion of those who desire the advancement of the education of the people a feeling of alarm at the possible consequences of a continuance of the existing difficulties, and that the parents of the Colony, speaking
generally, entertain a great desire that all the existing difficulties in the way of the religious education of the young should be grappled with, whilst at the same time the system of a compulsory gratuitous system of education should be preserved.

On the other hand, there is no doubt a portion of the population who are satisfied with the Act in its present form and who desire no change, but these constitute, if I may judge by the evidence, a small minority, consisting mainly of the secularists who would destroy all religious influences, and the Jews at whose instigation the Christian passages in the reading-books were eliminated.

The evidence, however, shows that the vast majority of the population desire that such amendments should be introduced into the Act as would, whilst removing the present appearance of antagonism to religion, afford facilities for securing religious instruction of a Christian character to the young.

The evidence shows that the Protestant denominations, speaking generally, desirous of being able to afford religious instruction without some modification of the present Act, hence their complaint of a grievous defect in the Act; and they urge, as a foundation to which voluntary assistance may be auxiliary, the paramount necessity of Scripture readings, from both the Old and the New Testament, being made a part of the school curriculum.

The Bishop of Melbourne, Dr. Moorhouse, put the matter in a practical form when he stated that "the voluntary movement lacked a very important element, viz., that the ordinary teacher did not instruct the children. He wanted permanent organization—one that could last, and do the work. The school curriculum should include religion; nothing else would cover the ground."

The evidence is distinct that a scheme of such readings might be framed which would be acceptable to the various Protestant denominations—such a table has, in fact, been prepared by the London School Board.

The children of parents who gave a written notice of their objection to their children attending such lessons should be excused from attending the lessons.

It would be necessary, also, to excuse from reading such lessons any teacher who should declare in writing that he had conscientious objections to reading them.

If a school had one teacher only, and that teacher declared in writing his or her conscientious objection to reading the Scripture lessons, the Board of Advice of the district or other local authority should be entitled to approve of a person, either clerical or lay, who could read the lessons.

It would, however, I believe, be found that in practice the case of a teacher objecting to read the lessons on the score of conscience would be of very rare occurrence.

Again, referring to the evidence, it was pressed upon the Commission by some well-qualified witnesses that a series of questions should be framed upon the lessons read, which would interest the children and test their attention without introducing polemical discussion into the character of the teaching. This, it was stated, could easily be done.

Many of the witnesses examined expressed decided opinions, which they said were based upon wide observation, that the Irish National Scripture Lesson Books would be very generally acceptable to the Protestant portion of the population as Scripture lesson books in the schools.

Such a system as that sketched out would introduce undenominational religious instruction of a Christian character in the State schools in a manner which would supply the defect complained of by the Protestant denominations, and could neither lessen the time at present devoted to secular instruction nor interfere with the conscience of those parents who did not wish their children to attend the Scripture lessons.

To effect this amendment, which the evidence has satisfied me is desired, speaking generally, by the Protestant portion of the population, it would be necessary to repeal section 12 of the present Act, and to enact in its place a section similar to that in the New South Wales Act—an amendment which would admit of the teaching, as a part of the school curriculum, the broad principles of the Christian religion apart from sectarian distinctions. Scripture readings and lessons based upon this principle should then form part of the school curriculum, the first half hour before the time fixed for the commencement of the secular lessons being devoted to the purpose, the State-school teacher giving the prescribed instruction except in those cases in which the teacher had stated in writing that he had conscientious objections to doing so.

All statutory and departmental prohibitions or impediments in the way of the State-school teachers giving religious instruction in school-buildings should be removed,
so that the State-school teachers should be on an equal footing as to voluntary religious teaching with the rest of Her Majesty's subjects.

The words in Your Excellency's commission, the "alleged grievance of a portion of the population," have no doubt been generally looked upon as relating to the Roman Catholic portion of the population only, but, so far as the present exclusion of Christianity from the State-school system goes, I believe that if the evidence of the Protestant witnesses be fairly and dispassionately considered it will be found that the grievance extends to all those, whether Protestants or Catholics, who believe that it is essential to the best interests of society that the young should be trained in religious sentiments as the basis of moral conduct through life.

In the preceding observations, I have submitted to Your Excellency the relief which, it appears from the evidence, is sought by the Protestant portion of the population. I shall now proceed to the consideration of the evidence upon the claims of the Roman Catholic portion of the population.

In reference to these claims, the evidence establishes the fact that whilst the members of the Roman Catholic Church would gladly recognize the advantage that would accrue to their Protestant fellow-colonists by the establishment of Scripture lessons in the school, to be read by the teachers as part of the curriculum, and would hail with satisfaction the introduction of greater facilities for voluntary Christian teaching in the schools which would be satisfactory to the Protestants, yet that such concession to the desire of the Protestant denominations would not render the State schools such as would allow Roman Catholic parents to accept them as offering a suitable education to their children.

The Roman Catholic portion of the population appear to me, from the evidence, to urge as a grievance that they alone of the taxpayers of the colony are unable, without violation of their religious conscience, to benefit by the gratuitous system of secular instruction afforded in the State schools, to which, however, they, in common with those colonists who are enabled to benefit by the system, have to contribute.

The Returns show that a large number of Roman Catholic children attend State schools (the Catholic schools being few in number), but if, as the evidence shows, the Catholic conscience is hurt by the necessity of sending their children to State schools, from the fear of penalties and the absence of Catholic schools, then it follows logically that the greater the number of Roman Catholic children sent to State schools the greater is the pressure which the law inflicts upon the conscience of its Roman Catholic subjects.

They, therefore, propose that they should provide their own school-buildings, which, however, should be used for none other than school purposes or religious services, and should be subject to State inspection; that whilst they should select their own school teachers, no teacher should be employed who had not either obtained a Government certificate as a competent teacher, or who should otherwise give sufficient proof to the Government of his or her fitness as a teacher.

They propose that the teachers should be subject to the same superintendence, suspension, and dismissal, as the ordinary State-school teachers; and that the secular curriculum of their schools should be the same as that of the State schools, and the examination of their scholars the same.

That the only payment they would ask from the State would be a payment per capita for the results in secular instruction obtained in their schools. As to the amount of payment for each scholar, the evidence somewhat varied, some of the witnesses being of opinion that the rate should be the same as the cost to the State of each State-school scholar, whilst others were of opinion that the Roman Catholics would be satisfied with a payment per capita at a somewhat lower rate.

In reference to the question of payment, it may be well here to state that from the returns presented to the Commission it would appear that in the schools established by the Roman Catholic Church since the present Act came into operation, the cost for each scholar was only £1 16s. 5d., whilst in the State schools the cost for each scholar was £4 0s. 9½d. It must be observed, however, that the very small cost per scholar at the Roman Catholic schools is attributable in a great part to the fact that the teaching in the schools has been largely conducted by members of religious orders, both male and female. If certificated lay teachers were employed, no doubt the cost for each scholar would more nearly approach that of the scholars in the State schools.

The evidence taken before the Commission shows that the secular instruction at the Roman Catholic schools has been quite equal to that at the State schools.
This proposal of the Roman Catholics would place their schools very much in the position of non-vested schools, subject to the same control, so far as secular instruction is concerned, as the ordinary State schools.

As the payment to be made would be in respect of the secular instruction only, the religious instruction being supplied by the Roman Catholics themselves and at their own cost, the proposal seems to me to be wholly free from the objection of a return to the system of State aid to denominational education.

The State would contribute nothing to the erection or maintenance of such non-vested schools, nor would it pay the salaries of the teachers, nor would it contribute to the cost of the religious instruction. It would pay merely a capitation fee in respect of secular subjects for those scholars who attained that proficiency in secular attainments which the State requires from all the children of the colony. The amount per head ought to be less than the average cost of State-school children, as the latter is calculated upon the basis of the cost of the school buildings from which the estimate for the payment to the scholars in non-vested schools should be deducted inasmuch as the cost of the buildings and their repair is to fall upon those establishing them.

As regards any increase of expense to the colony it is clear that the increase would not be nearly so great as it would be if the members of the Roman Catholic Church closed their present schools. If such an event took place, then the children now educated in them would have to be educated at the State schools, at the rate of £4 9s. 9d. per head, the present rate of cost of State-school children. It should also be taken into account that the State has already expended in school buildings £1,115,863 10s. 6d., and this would have to be increased by a further outlay equivalent to about a fourth of that amount, if the schools, already erected by the Roman Catholics, were to be closed.

Although the proposal for the payment by the State of a capitation allowance for results in secular subjects of instruction has arisen with the Roman Catholics, and is at present only required for them (although, as will be seen further on, I have suggested an analogous system might, on the score of economy and efficiency, be introduced in sparsely populated parts of the country), yet, even if others asked that the same system should be applied to them, no further cost would be incurred by the State, since those who asked for the extension of the system to themselves would have to purchase sites and build schools out of their own moneys, and thus the State would be saved the cost of providing buildings for such scholars as were taught in such non-vested schools.

As the capitation allowance would only be paid in respect of those scholars who attained the Government standard, and as the examination would be conducted by the Government inspectors, there could be no deterioration in attainments in secular subjects.

Another important consideration which should not be lost sight of is, that at present the State has no power of learning, by inspection and examination, whether the children at Roman Catholic schools are receiving efficient instruction, or that the instruction is given in suitable buildings. By the proposed system the necessary right of inspection and examination would be established.

The evidence given before the Commission by lay members of the Roman Catholic Church has satisfied me, beyond all doubt, that the present system is a heavy grievance upon the Roman Catholic portion of the population. In country districts where there are no Roman Catholic schools, the parents of Roman Catholic children are constrained, under penalties which may be enforced by imprisonment, to send their children to schools of which in their conscience they disapprove. One lay Roman Catholic witness, from a country district, when illustrating the grievance of which he and others of his religious persuasion complained, said that "he believed Englishmen, if they could thoroughly understand the Roman Catholic grievance, would not perpetrate such a wrong."

It would, therefore, seem to me desirable if the dissatisfaction with the present system in so large a proportion of the population as that of the members of the Roman Catholic Church can be removed, and a greater political unity in the whole population be secured by the adoption of a mode that would really not be inconsistent with the working of a State system of Christian undenominational instruction, and which would retain in the State a control over the secular instruction of the youth of the colony, that the experiment should have a fair trial. No disturbance of the present departmental arrangements would be required, and if the system did not produce the result which the evidence leads me to hope for, it might be discontinued.
I would again observe that this arrangement need not necessarily be confined to schools established by Roman Catholics. If any other society of persons, sufficiently distinct to afford a guarantee to the Government that the conditions would be complied with, should be willing, at their own expense, to erect and dedicate to the purpose suitable buildings, to provide proper salaried certificated teachers, and to conform in other respects to the conditions, they should be entitled to similar payments for secular results for scholars brought up to the Government standard.

I believe that the proposed system would be so protected by the heavy expense which would be incurred by individuals availing themselves of it (excepting in sparsely populated districts where homesteads were used as schools, and where the State would gain a great advantage), that it would not be likely to be abused, and the only rivalry with the State schools would be such as would tend to keep the State schools up to their standard.

In dealing with the evidence upon this subject, it is worthy of remark that several of the Protestant witnesses expressed a generous sympathy with their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects as to the grievance of which they complained; some expressing their views that concession should be made to the Roman Catholics if religious instruction to the young could be generally secured. In fact, the grievance complained of by the Roman Catholics is not more pointedly expressed in any portion of the evidence than in that of a Protestant minister, who stated in his evidence “He did not hesitate to say that if he were a Roman Catholic he would fight to the death against the maintenance of the Act as at present.”

I regret much that the majority of the Commissioners present at the deliberations upon the Draft Report, whilst proposing some relief to the Protestant portion of the population, have arrived at conclusions adverse to the claim of the Roman Catholic portion of the population to relief.

The claims of the two sections of the population are so interwoven that I doubt whether the concession can be made to the one and withheld from the other, so that the result of the rejection of the Roman Catholic claims might be the continued exclusion of Christianity from the schools, which I believe would, in a comparatively short time, result in serious calamity to the colony.

I have dealt, in the first place, with the question of religion in relation to education, including as it does the consideration of “the alleged grievances of a portion of the population” (although the majority of the Commissioners present at the deliberations upon the Draft Report, altering the order of my Draft Report, have made it the second part of their Report), because the evidence has deeply impressed me with a conviction of the paramount importance to the future welfare and peace of the colony, of an unbiased, impartial, and liberal treatment of the difficulty.

With the recommendations of that portion of the Report—“Part I.”—which deals with “The whole administration, organization, and general condition of the existing system of public instruction,” I desire to express my general concurrence. Many of the imperfections and evils which the evidence has shown to exist, and which are referred to in the Report, would by the adoption of the proposed amendment be removed, and I believe that the general efficiency of the State school system would be increased, and the present large expenditure kept under more control, and somewhat, if not considerably, reduced.

There are, however, one or two points of importance in the evidence which I think are hardly sufficiently dealt with in the Report, and to which I think it my duty to refer.

One of the most important of these is the inquiry as to the several degrees in which centralization and local administration should prevail. The question is one of degree, inasmuch as a central department, with more or less extensive authority, will always be necessary to secure a uniform standard of instruction and discipline.

Although the Commission has by no means entered exhaustively into the subject, yet the evidence taken has shown that, in the best interests of a general system of education, it is most desirable to entrust different localities with as much local control as would be consistent with a general superintendence in the central department. The evidence has shown that the attention of the central department is principally, if not wholly, directed to producing a certain intellectual sharpness and the acquisition of a fixed limit of secular knowledge, and that there has consequently been an indifference in both inspectors and teachers to the cultivation of moral principles and conduct in the children. It was also stated by some of the most competent witnesses—teachers in State schools and head masters of public grammar schools—that the quality of the secular instruction had deteriorated under the present system; and the weight of evidence was very distinct that, since the education had been gratuitous, the parents
were far more negligent in compelling the regular school attendance of the children than under the old system.

Whilst the present system has been accompanied with these results, the annual expenditure out of the general revenue has increased until it has reached last year considerably over half a million of money.

By the introduction of a sounder system of local control, and by throwing some part of the expense of the system upon the local rates, I believe much greater economy would be secured, and that a practical interest would be awakened in the minds of parents, which would secure attention to the moral conduct of the children, the more regular attendance of the children at school, and, as a necessary consequence, a more effective and valuable education.

When the system was introduced it was, no doubt, thought that Boards of Advice would have had more direct control and influence than the evidence shows them to have had.

The evidence is very clear that there has been a tendency in the Department to ignore the Boards of Advice. Lately there has been some change in the policy of the Department in this respect, but the law should be so clear as to the duties, powers, and rights of Boards of Advice or other local authorities that the question of their proper weight and influence to the work of the Department should be placed beyond the caprice of either the political or permanent heads of the Department.

As the groundwork for a more effective local control, I would submit that it would be desirable if the boundaries of Boards of Advice or other local authorities were at once so arranged that they should not overlap different municipal districts.

This would require that, if there should happen to be only one Board of Advice within a municipal district, that its boundaries should be so arranged as to be wholly coterminous with those of that municipal district. If more than one Board of Advice was within one municipal district, then that the boundaries of all those Boards of Advice should be so arranged as to be wholly included within the boundaries of that municipal district.

Were this re-arrangement of the boundaries of Boards of Advice at once made, the improved mode of taking the school census recommended in the Report, and which I believe would be found to be highly beneficial, would be much facilitated.

The utter failure of the Department to obtain a proper school census is pointed out in the Report. If the compulsory attendance of children is to be effected, a proper census is essential, and I believe that, by the employment of the rate collectors of the several municipal bodies, a complete school census could be obtained at a merely nominal cost. But to secure this the boundaries of school districts must be arranged as I have proposed.

The re-arrangement of boundaries upon the system proposed would also prepare the way for the substitution of the municipal council for a separately elected Board of Advice when such substitution should be deemed desirable.

Some witnesses of great experience who were examined expressed opinions favorable to such a change.

There are many reasons why such a change would be advantageous; one would be that, in such an event, school buildings, when once erected, would be vested in the municipality, with the responsibility of repairing and furnishing the buildings, and of planting and keeping in good order the play-grounds, out of the municipal rates, a change which, whilst it would relieve the Department from much labour which it at present ill discharges at great outlay, would also relieve the general revenue, and, by creating a claim upon the local rates, would induce a greater interest in the proper care of the buildings and in the school generally.

Although it may be deemed that the time has not yet arrived for removing any great portion of the expense of education from the general revenue to the localities in which the parents reside, yet the evidence certainly shows that both economy and efficiency would be effected by throwing the cost of repairs and control of the buildings upon the localities in which they are situate.

Several members of Boards of Advice, who were also members or officers of municipal councils, stated in their evidence that they thought the time was approaching when municipalities should bear some portion of the cost of education.

Without in the first instance introducing so great a change as to render it compulsory upon municipalities to take over school buildings, it might be well to introduce an amendment into the Act, enabling municipal bodies to take over school
buildings and also the duties of Boards of Advice upon a vote of the ratepayers. The municipal council could, in such case, form a representative school board.

Whilst I have thought it my duty to draw Your Excellency's attention to the consideration of the possibility of creating an active interest in parents and a relief of the general revenue by introducing municipal government and responsibility into the State-school system—which I believe would eventually be the most effective mode of securing economy and efficiency—I would wish to express my opinion that the proposal for the creation of school committees with substantial and defined powers, which is set out in the Report, would, if adopted, be a decided improvement upon the present system; but I would still recommend that the territorial boundaries of the jurisdiction of the proposed committees and provincial school boards should be arranged upon the principle which I have suggested for the re-adjustment of the boundaries of Boards of Advice.

The school census might then, in future, be taken by the officers of the municipality, and if time should show the desirability of substituting municipal councils for district committees, the change could be made.

Whilst dealing with the subject of the compulsory clause, the Report proposes an amendment in the present system, which, whilst not interfering with the principle of compulsory gratuitous education, will be found, if adopted, to effect not only a material economy, but to have a highly beneficial effect upon the education of State-school scholars generally. I refer to the recommendation to Your Excellency made in the Report, that if a child shall not have attained the compulsory standard of elementary instruction at the age of thirteen that then the parent shall be compelled to bear the cost of the school instruction of his child from that age until the child shall have either obtained its certificate or has, by having attained the age of fifteen years, become exempt from attendance at school. The evidence before the Commission was very distinct that since education had become gratuitous the parents had become far more careless in compelling the regular attendance of their children; it was also clearly established that the compulsory standard might, with the most ordinary children, be easily attained at the age of twelve or thirteen years, although from irregular attendance many children did not attain the standard till much later. It was shown also that the irregular attendance tended to retard the progress of the more regular children.

By the adoption of the suggestion in the Report it may be fairly anticipated that the attendance will become more regular and that the children will therefore become earlier entitled to their certificates, by which not only will a considerable expense in the otherwise more prolonged indifferent instruction be saved to the State, but the child will have been early trained in more regular habits of industry and application and will be earlier enabled to be trained to some industrial pursuit. It will also impress upon the parent that, whilst it is his right to have his child trained gratuitously to a certain standard of education, his right is coupled with the condition that he on his part shall discharge his duty to the State by compelling in his child a regular school attendance and attention to school work.

One great cause of expense is the necessity of numerous small schools in sparsely populated districts. The evidence has satisfied me that no full-time school should be maintained with a less assured average number of scholars in attendance than thirty; under this number the school should be made a half-time or third-time school. I believe, however, that much of the expense and difficulty of small schools in country places would be avoided, and their efficiency largely increased, if the system of payment for results in secular subjects, in a manner analogous to that which I herein have submitted to Your Excellency in reference to the Roman Catholic difficulty, were adopted in country places upon the request of a few resident heads of families.

Were this course adopted, I believe that in many cases the settlers in sparsely populated districts would give up a portion of their homesteads (so that there would be no necessity to erect school buildings) for the purpose of receiving the children of the locality for instruction, and that thus a most efficient mode of instruction, at small cost, would be established, in the place of very imperfect and expensive half-time or third-time schools.

All which matters I beg humbly to report and submit to Your Excellency.

J. WARRINGTON ROGERS,
Chairman of Royal Commission on Education.
SIR,

Royal Commission on Education,
Melbourne, 3rd July, 1884.

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that I have received a copy of a letter dated the 16th June, 1884, addressed to Your Excellency by John Warrington Rogers, Esquire, Q.C., formerly of Melbourne, the Chairman appointed by the Governor in Council to preside at the meetings of the Royal Commission on Education.

In the month of January last Mr. Rogers left the colony of Victoria to reside for a time in the colony of Tasmania, he having accepted the office of Acting Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of that colony.

Before his departure he requested that I would take charge of the financial business of the Commission, at the same time stating particular reasons why he desired that I, and not any other Commissioner, should take this responsibility. I at first declined, but afterwards, at the urgent entreaty of Mr. Rogers, I reluctantly consented to assume the duty, provided the Commissioners, at a duly constituted meeting, authorized the arrangement. The necessary authority of the Commissioners having been obtained, I assumed the duty as their nominee. By this means I became responsible to the Commission, and not (as would appear from his letter to Your Excellency) to Mr. Rogers, whose assumed right to the sole control of the business of the Commission I had always challenged. Mr. Rogers was therefore in error in reporting that it was a personal arrangement between himself and me.

At the first meeting of the Commission for deliberating as to their final Report, I was unanimously elected Chairman, to preside at all meetings during the absence of Mr. Rogers. As he never returned to this colony, I became de facto, although not de jure, the Chairman of the Commission.

I regret that Mr. Rogers should have assumed the duty of reporting to Your Excellency upon the proceedings of the Commission during his absence, and that, therefore, I am under the necessity of correcting errors which he has committed. Thus Mr. Rogers reports to Your Excellency that "the Commissioners have held deliberations extending over some months upon the draft Report prepared" by him, but that statement is not correct.

His draft Report was first taken into consideration on the 16th February last, and the Commission had completed the consideration thereof on the 18th March. I then received the instructions of the Commission to draft new clauses with regard to a number of matters which had been entirely overlooked by Mr. Rogers in preparing his draft, and was asked to re-draft the Report, embodying those clauses adopted by the Commission from Mr. Rogers' draft, and arranging the whole in proper sequence, in accordance with the classification of the evidence made by a Committee of the Commission over which I presided.

The final Report of the Commission was drafted by me, and was adopted, with slight verbal alterations, on the 22nd April last. Out of courtesy to Mr. Rogers, a copy thereof was sent to him for any suggestions he might desire to make. On the 17th May his suggestions were considered, a few of them being accepted, and the Report was finally adopted on the same day. On the 27th May the Report was sent to him for his signature, with a request that it should be returned without delay. Although it appears from a letter written by Mr. Rogers, dated 26th May, that he did not intend to sign the Report, yet he retained it in his hands until he sent his separate Report direct to Your Excellency.

The final Report of the Commission might have been presented to Your Excellency before the 1st May last, but for the delay during the month of May occasioned by waiting for the suggestions of Mr. Rogers, and by his improper retention of the document during the month of June, after he had determined not to sign it.
The Report did not reach me until the 25th June. On the 26th June a special meeting was called to consider the action of Mr. Rogers in forwarding his separate Report to Your Excellency before the Report of the Commission could even be signed, and the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

"That this Commission regrets that Judge Rogers should have taken the course he has in forwarding his separate Report direct to His Excellency the Governor before it was possible for the Commission to forward its Report, and further considers his action discourteous."

The Commissioners present were Messrs. Ormond, Han, Meares, Love, Keogh, Archer, Loughnan, and Templeton in the chair.

In conclusion, permit me to express to Your Excellency my regret that Mr. Rogers should have referred to differences of opinion between himself and me as to the mode of presenting the Report. If the matter had been of sufficient importance to warrant its being brought under Your Excellency’s notice, I would prove from previous letters of Mr. Rogers addressed to me that he had expressed his readiness to accept what he has been pleased to characterize as conditions imposed by me upon a recognition of his position as Chairman. I never assumed the right, nor could I concede it to Mr. Rogers, to decide how the Report should be presented—that was a question for the Commission, to whom I remitted it, and they decided to ask Your Excellency to receive a deputation. Your Excellency has been pleased to fix to-morrow, at 3 p.m., and the Commission will then attend to present their final Report.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

J. M. TEMPLETON,
Commissioner, Acting Chairman.

His Excellency the Governor, &c., &c., &c.
THIRD AND FINAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

We, Your Excellency's Commissioners, whose hands and seals are hereunto set, having been appointed by Your Excellency, in view of the yearly increase of expenditure necessitated by the extension of the existing system of Public Instruction, and further, in view of the alleged grievances of a portion of the population, to inquire into the whole administration, organization, and general condition of the existing system of Public Instruction in this colony, with the object of ascertaining its deficiencies, improving its working, and, while retaining its efficiency, providing the most economic mode of further extending its operation, do most humbly submit to Your Excellency this our Third and Final Report.

Immediately after our Second Report was presented to Your Excellency, we proceeded to take further evidence regarding the administration of the Education Act. Besides Mr. Brown (the Secretary of the Education Department), whom we recalled on several occasions, we examined a number of inspectors of schools and truant officers, Mr. Gladman (the Superintendent of the Central Training Institution), and a large number of State-school teachers, both male and female. We took special evidence in reference to singing, drawing, and gymnastics as taught in State schools, as well as to the powers and functions of Boards of Advice; and we also examined a number of witnesses unconnected with the Department, from whom we obtained much valuable information.

For convenience in drafting and considering this Report, we appointed three of our number as a Committee to analyze and classify the evidence which we had taken on the various branches of our inquiry. The analysis prepared under the direction of this Committee has been printed, and we found it of so much service as a ready reference to the very voluminous evidence taken by us, that we have appended it to our Report in the hope that Your Excellency will find it useful in dealing with the various recommendations which we have considered it to be our duty to make. In the arrangement of subjects, we have followed the system of classification adopted by the Committee in the analysis of the evidence, and have divided the Report into two parts, viz. —

PART I.—The whole administration, organization, and general condition of the existing system of Public Instruction, with the object of ascertaining its deficiencies, improving its working, subdivided into—

(I.) General Management and Control.
(II.) Buildings.
(III.) Children.
(IV.) School Organization.
(V.) Instruction.
(VI.) Teachers.
(VII.) Training of Teachers.
(VIII.) Inspection.
(IX.) Local Control.
(X.) Compulsory Clause.

PART II.—Religion in relation to Education, subdivided into—

(I.) Religious Instruction in State Schools.
(II.) The alleged Grievances of a Portion of the Population.
PART I.

THE WHOLE ADMINISTRATION, ORGANIZATION, AND GENERAL CONDITION OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

I. General Management and Control.

A leading feature in the administration of the Education Acts has been the extreme centralization of all authority. Section 5 of Act No. 447 provides that, "For the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act an Education Department shall be formed, to consist of a Minister of Public Instruction, who shall be a responsible Minister of the Crown, a Secretary, an Inspector-General, inspectors, teachers, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary," and section 18 empowers the Governor in Council from time to time to make and rescind regulations for certain purposes therein specified, "and generally for carrying this Act into effect." The Regulations framed under the Act contain no reference to the functions of the Education Department directed to be formed, nor to the responsibilities and duties of the officers thereof. One of the evils arising from this omission is the evident absence of harmony between the teachers and the other officers of the Department. One of the most experienced teachers, in his evidence, said, "There is virtually no co-operation between the Department and the teachers of schools. The inspector, instead of being one to whom a teacher could look for advice and encouragement, is simply a sort of detective sent to the school," &c., and when asked, "Now, are the dealings with the Department such as to lead you to believe you are a portion of the Department?" he replied, "No. I asked, about a fortnight ago, one of our oldest teachers what he understood by the 'Department,' and I got the following answer: 'The Department is sometimes the Secretary, sometimes the Inspector-General, sometimes the Chief Clerk, and in a few instances all three.' That was the answer I got, and I thought it a very good one." Another evil, arising from the absence of regulations as to the duties of the various officers of the Department, is what has been described as "government by circular." As points arise which seem to call for general rules, circulars are issued to teachers, directing the course to be followed, and these are altered and amended by other circulars as occasion seems to require, and thus it is sometimes very difficult to say what are the rules in force. As the success of the Education system depends to a very great extent on the zeal and ability displayed by the teachers, we are of opinion that every effort should be made to evoke and encourage a spirit of mutual confidence between teachers and other officers, and as a first step in this direction we recommend that regulations be framed and promulgated, setting forth as far as practicable the duties and responsibilities of the various officers of the Department and their relations one to another. The relations between inspectors and teachers should be clearly and fully stated.

Up to the present time not only questions of policy and matters of grave import—which must necessarily be so dealt with—but also subjects of the most trivial nature have been referred to the central office for decision, and the result has been—as stated by one of the inspectors—that the Department has paid too much attention to matters of routine and has not had time to make necessary changes." Under the head of "Local Control," infra, we make certain recommendations, which will, if adopted, relieve the central office of much detail, and we consider that many trivial matters might be left to the decision of head teachers or district inspectors.

In our Second Report, presented to Your Excellency on 18th April, 1885, we represented to Your Excellency the urgent necessity of a change in the manner of appointing and promoting teachers so as to render it impossible for political considerations to enter into the question of appointments and promotions. The Public Service Act, which has since passed the Legislature, has so far adopted the views urged by us upon Your Excellency's attention that it is unnecessary to pursue the matter further, either as to the office staff or the teachers, as all such questions will now be dealt with by the Public Service Board.

The Regulations clause following 1888, which evidence given before us shows that there are several defects in the mode of carrying out this system. The principle itself is recognized and continued by the Public Service Act, but the particular method of carrying it out remains open to amendment. There are some points which seem clear:—1st.—That a less proportion of the teacher's income should depend upon results. 2nd.—That there should be a modification of the age test. 3rd.—That allowance should be made for absences if the inspector be satisfied as to the cause of absence. 4th.—That the
examination should be conducted in such a manner as to give more weight to general intelligence and less weight to mere mechanical accuracy of the scholars; and, 5th, which we consider the most important of all, that a distinct allowance should be made in respect of the moral tone and general organization of the school. This allowance should be determined on at the casual visit to the school, whilst the remaining portion of the allowance, dependent upon the intellectual attainments of the scholars, would be made at the fixed result examination. By the adoption of this method, the enlarged duty of the teacher which we recommend in reference to the morals and manners of the children would be specifically paid for. We would recommend that not more than fifteen per centum of the teacher's income should depend upon results, and that one-third of the amount payable for results should be dependent upon the organization and moral tone of the school. We think, also, that the present system of minute percentages should be abolished, and that the payment should go by round numbers and not by decimals.

Expenditure.—As the law provides for free and compulsory education throughout the colony, the amount expended must necessarily be large. Last year it amounted to £614,276 8s. vi.—office staff, inspection, and teaching, £557,625 7s. 9d.; and buildings, £56,651 8s. 9d. In our First Report, presented to Your Excellency on the 1st May, 1882, we recommended that the Architect's branch of the Education Department should be transferred to the Public Works Department. We are glad to see by the Report of the Honorable the Minister of Public Instruction of the 7th September, 1889, that steps were then being taken to carry out our recommendation. This, we understand, has since been accomplished, and we have no doubt that the economy in time and money which the evidence led us to expect will be realized. Should the suggestions be adopted which we make in reference to buildings—the payment by negligent parents of the additional expense to which the State is put by their neglect to send their children regularly to school—the abolition of the allowances to trainees—the discontinuance of the system of associated schools—the closing of unnecessary schools—the abolition of night schools—the practice of the Department of paying for children under four and over fifteen years of age—and the raising of the minimum number of children for one school in sparsely populated districts—the limitation of the free grant of books and other requisites to those unable to pay for them—we are of opinion that some economy may be effected with advantage to the system; but we are unable to suggest any large reduction of the cost to the State so long as gratuitous instruction is provided. It might, however, be worth consideration whether, even at this late stage, grants of Crown lands could not be made as endowments for State education. We have not had the materials at hand for making ourselves fully acquainted with the system in this regard adopted in other countries; but that pursued in New Zealand, from evidence before us, appears to work well, and we would recommend the subject to Your Excellency's consideration.

Reports and Recommendations of Inspectors.—One matter which calls for comment and requires alteration is that hitherto the suggestions and reports of inspectors have too often been left unheeded. To give more force to these suggestions of inspectors, we think that it would be well if they were to meet in Melbourne annually for the purpose of holding a conference. We recommend that at this conference the inspectors should compare the results of their several inspectorial visits; consider any recommendations and suggestions of teachers; prepare for the Minister a report setting out the general result of their work in the past year, and suggest and recommend such reforms and improvements in the working of the schools and the system generally as, in their experiences, should seem desirable for the better working of the State-school system. It might be well that this Board should be presided over by the Inspector-General; and we would further suggest that the report of this inspectorial Board should be printed and circulated, instead of the separate reports of each individual inspector, as is the present practice. By this means greater unity of action would be secured.

Annual Report.—We recommend that the Annual Report should be prepared with more expedition than has been the ease hitherto. It is of great importance that this report should be circulated as soon as possible after the year is closed. We suggest also that the details of expenditure on schools should be made up to the close of the financial year (30th June), so as to afford the means of comparing the totals with the items of the general account. The practice has been to make the detailed statement up to 31st December, while the general statement has been made up to 30th June.
II. Buildings.

It appears from the evidence that the expenditure on new buildings is regulated by the head of the Department, but that much economy might be effected if the Department steadily resisted all political influence brought to bear upon it in favour of the erection of school-houses not really required. In several instances it has been proved to us that new school-houses have been erected which were not necessary, but which have simply drained existing buildings of their scholars—buildings which, if the Department had been uninfluenced by any other consideration than the public service, would not have been erected. Again, in the answers received by us from head teachers to questions submitted to them, the statements that schools are too close together are so frequently made, and, in support of such statements, so many instances are given, that we would recommend that instructions be immediately issued to the district inspectors to specially report on the subject, and that on their reports prompt steps should be taken to close unnecessary schools. We give a few extracts from the reports of teachers, to show the necessity for action. As, however, the answers were confidential, reference to the particular schools has been avoided for obvious reasons.

One teacher reports:—"In this district there are six schools, at intervals of from two to three miles." Another reports:—"A school was opened near A, when there was sufficient accommodation in the old one." Another reports:—"A competing school was erected less than one mile and a half from B or C school." Another reports:—"At D, a school to accommodate 40 scholars, was erected by the Department, yet quite recently another school has been erected within two miles, the attendance at which is entirely made up of scholars from D." Another reports:—"In this place schools are too close together." Another report says:—"New schools are injudiciously established in country districts, so that they destroy each other, and previously-existing schools as well." Another reports:—"E is only one mile from F school; one central school would have accommodated all the children." Another reports:—"There are two schools within three miles of this; if one were closed, and the other removed two miles away, only one family would have more than two miles to walk to a school. The second of the two schools could be amalgamated with a third, and thus the cost of both those referred to would be saved." Another reports:—"G, although in H, was erected without the consent of the local board. It is within three miles of my school, and is altogether unnecessary." Another reports:—"The school next this could be done away with without any loss to the children, for every child could attend one of three other schools; and I find similar cases exist all over the colony." We would remark that these extracts bear reference to country schools, and that in most cases the establishment of these unnecessary schools is stated to have been caused by political action.

A remarkable fact connected with the erection of buildings is that teachers have never been consulted with respect to the internal arrangements. We consider that those who have daily experience of the conveniences or inconveniences of the accommodation provided in school buildings are best fitted to give advice as to the arrangement of class-rooms. Several of the teachers examined by us called attention to cases of faulty construction. The school buildings generally are stated to be in good repair, and suitable for the purposes of instruction. The repairs to school buildings have always been carried out by direct instructions from the central office, but we consider that such matters could be better attended to by local bodies. We make our recommendation on this subject under the head of "Local Control."

III. Children.

School Ages.—No limit has been fixed to the permissive ages of attendance (except that the Department does not pay for children under three years of age), and much discussion has arisen as to whether any and what age should be fixed as the minimum age at which a child should be admitted. From the evidence which we have taken, we think that the best age to fix on as the earliest age at which a child should be admissible would be four years. We do not think that the State should be called upon to find the necessary accommodation for younger children.

Attendance.—The number of children in the colony under instruction has very much increased since the introduction of the present system of education. The
attendance of children at State schools had increased by 70 per cent. between 1872 and 1880, whilst the increase during the same period of the number of children in the colony of school age was 12 per cent. only, and this was accompanied by an augmentation of the number attending private schools. The Government Statist’s estimate from the census returns of 1881 was that more than 96 per cent. of the children at school age were receiving education during some portion of the year. Many of the teachers, however, gave evidence that the children were more irregular in their attendance under the present system of free education than they were under previous systems when school fees were paid. It might be well to issue to head teachers a supply of post-cards to enable them to notify parents of the absence of their children from school. We give (in Appendix H) a form of card which we consider suitable, and we recommend that such cards be sent post free in the same manner as is provided for the collection of statistics for the Government Statist.

Transfers.—The practice of permitting children to be transferred from one State school to another at any time without formality is decidedly prejudicial to the best interests of the children. We refer again to this matter, and make our suggestions under the head of Local Control, infra.

Morality and Conduct of the Children.—The evidence which we have taken upon this subject at a first glance appears contradictory—the inspectors and State-school teachers whom we have examined generally stating the moral conduct of the children as being rather better than under the late system, whilst witnesses representing the various religious denominations speak of a deterioration in the moral tone of the young, and predict a greater deterioration in years to come, unless some advance is made in religious instruction. We believe that the observation of the inspectors and State-school teachers is largely based upon their observance of actual school discipline in school hours and in the school itself, whilst the evidence of the other witnesses is based upon their observation of the conduct of the children out of school hours in the streets and in their homes. We are of opinion, from the whole evidence, especially from that of the officers of the Department, that the attention of the inspector and teacher is directed almost exclusively to the conduct of the children in reference to their school work. We do not attribute this to a want of moral tone in the teachers, but to the system of the Department, which seems to us to ignore responsibility in reference to the children outside the school, and to be directed to producing a certain amount of intellectual sharpness and to the acquisition of a fixed amount of secular knowledge.

IV. School Organization.

Furniture and Apparatus.—The evidence of some of the teachers appears to indicate that the furniture and fittings in school buildings are not always suitable, and that it would be desirable to increase the supply of apparatus, such as diagrams and pictures.

Books and Free Stock.—We are of opinion that the gratuitous supply of books to the scholars leads to waste, which results not only in an expense to the State, but in the encouragement of improvident habits in both the children and their parents; and we would suggest that in future books and similar requisites should not be supplied gratuitously, except in cases where the head teacher is satisfied of the inability of the parent to pay.

Discipline.—In our Second Report we have expressed to Your Excellency our views upon the question of corporal punishment. Any further evidence which we have since received has only confirmed us in the views then expressed. We would here suggest that the head teacher should be encouraged to inquire into and deal with the conduct of the child from the time of its leaving home to attend school to the time of its return to its parents.

Mixed Schools.—In reference to school organization, one of the principal questions to which we had to direct our attention was the question of mixed schools, i.e., schools of girls and boys. The Department appears to have discouraged the separation of the sexes, whilst many of the teachers endeavoured to establish it, and gave their experience of its advantages. The evidence taken upon this subject was somewhat conflicting. Some witnesses considered the mixed system an evil which should be avoided, whilst others considered the system as an educational advantage to both sexes. The preponderance of evidence was, however, clearly in favour of a separation of the sexes in the 4th class and upwards, and that the girls’ classes should be
taken by female teachers. We are divided in opinion upon the question of mixed
schools, and are not therefore prepared to propose any radical change in the present
system, although we recommend that, where practicable (for instance, in schools of
400 and upwards), the sexes should be kept separate in the 4th class and upwards,
and that the present departmental practice of discouraging the separation of the
sexes should be discontinued. We would earnestly urge the great importance of in
cases making suitable provision for separate recreation grounds and separate and
completely detached out-offices for the two sexes.

Small and Half-time Schools.—In the country and in sparsely populated
districts the important question of small schools has to be dealt with. To prevent
the creation of unnecessary schools, no schools outside a city, town, or borough should
be established or maintained nearer than four miles apart; this would leave only two
miles for any child to walk to school. The distance between schools on lines of rail-
way might well be greater—and thus the number of schools at present in existence be
greatly reduced—by adopting the provision of section 14 of the New South Wales
Act,* by which station-masters are allowed to grant free passes to school children
under certain restrictions. We are of opinion that no full-time school should be
maintained with a less average number of scholars in attendance than 20; under
this number the school should be made a half-time school. We are also of opinion
that half-time schools should be brought under the operation of the compulsory
clauses of the Act. The children attending these schools should be compelled to
attend 27 days each quarter if the school is open three days a week; or, if for a lesser
time, then the children should attend a proportionate number of days. We would also
recommend that the exchange of positions between assistants in cities, towns, and large
boroughs, and the head teachers of small country schools, for short periods of
three and six months, be encouraged by the Department, provided the transit expenses he
borne by the teachers concerned. The benefits of the practice would be twofold:
First, the town teacher, who might be overworked and in delicate health, would be
braced and invigorated by the temporary change, and, being conversant with the
most improved methods of school management, would thereby improve the country
school in that respect; and secondly, the head teacher of the country school would,
during his term of town residence, be greatly improved in many ways besides in the
knowledge of school management. The exchange should be arranged—as to differ-
ce in salary, &c.—entirely by the teachers concerned. This could be done in the
first instance through some acknowledged channel (e.g., the public press), and after-
wards by correspondence; but when the arrangements were completed the teachers
should state the facts and request the consent of the Minister to the exchange, which
consent the Minister would give or withhold as he thought fit. For the sake of
school discipline, however, it would be necessary for the assistant requiring the
change to obtain in the first place the permission from his own head teacher; but we
do not apprehend any opposition from this quarter, as we are convinced that any
head teacher, who has the true interests of his profession at heart, would be only too
glad, for the reasons we have given, not only to consent to the temporary exchange,
but to assist it by all means in his power.

Night Schools.—We reported upon this subject in our Second Report to
Your Excellency, and do not consider it necessary to say more than that any fresh
evidence which has come before us has confirmed our opinion that they should be
abolished.

Ragged Schools.—We are not inclined to adopt the suggestion made to us,
that ragged or preparatory schools for the neglected and vicious children should be
established in the large centres of population. It is in evidence that in no case had a
child been refused admittance to a State school for being poorly or deficiently clad;
although in some instances children had, on the score of decency, been very properly
sent home, when they presented themselves in a ragged or dirty state. With a
more vigorous administration of the compulsory clauses of the Act, we are of opinion
that all truants can be gathered into the State schools, and in regard to the vicious or
incorrigible children, the power of expulsion under certain circumstances, proposed
by us to be conferred on the Provincial Boards, will tend to prevent the contamination
of the better children.

* We have received a reply from the Acting Under-Secretary, New South Wales, to a communication addressed
by us to the Government of New South Wales on this subject, in which the following passage occurs:—"I beg to
state that the provisions of the section mentioned appear to operate successfully. In a few instances, questions have
been raised as to which public school is the nearest to the residence of the parents, but these questions have been easily
settled."
Size of Schools.—The number of scholars in one school—in other words, the size of schools—is a question of much importance as well on the score of health as of instruction and discipline. The evidence discloses great difference of opinion among skilled witnesses. We are of opinion that whilst in large centres of population small schools would be undesirable and extravagant, yet, considering the health of the children, the personal knowledge the head teacher should possess of each pupil, and the undesirableness of collecting too large a number of children together during recreation hours, that, without interfering with existing schools, for the future, schools of 500 should be encouraged, and that 750 should be treated as the maximum number for any one school.

Removal of Assistant Teachers without consulting the Head Teacher.—The practice of the Department of arbitrarily removing an assistant teacher without consulting the head teacher, is, we believe, very injurious to the discipline and effective organization of the school. Upon this point the evidence of the head teachers is very clear, and we are of opinion that, whilst the promotion of careful assistants should not be unreasonably delayed, yet that in every case timely notice of an intended removal should be sent to the head teacher, and any valid objection which he should express to such removal should meet with attentive consideration. Instances have occurred where an incompetent assistant has been forced by the Department upon the head teacher notwithstanding the remonstrance of the latter, although the head master is held responsible for the whole work of the school, and is partly paid according to the results obtained at the inspector’s examination. Therefore we would recommend that teachers should be consulted prior to the removal of an assistant from one school to another, and that, should a head teacher report an assistant for incompetency, the Department should thereupon remove him to another school, and, on a similar report from the second head teacher, the assistant, if such report be confirmed by the district inspector, should be dismissed from the service. Further, we are of opinion that, where a vacancy occurs for an assistant, the names of three persons qualified to fill the vacancy should be forwarded by the Department to the head teacher, and the one chosen by him should obtain the appointment.

Private Schools.—We recommend that private-school teachers should be required to furnish the return prescribed in section 10 of Act No. 541 every quarter, instead of annually, as at present.

V. Instruction.

Programme of Subjects.—The evidence of the inspectors and teachers shows that some improvement in the present scope of the instruction is desirable. The course of instruction given seems to us to be too theoretical, and at the same time too narrow. We would not propose that for the compulsory education anything beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, as at present, should be required; but we believe that the reading might be directed into useful channels, and that the arithmetic might have a more practical application. In reading, we think that attention should be directed to the study of useful things, such as the simple laws of mechanics, the simple elements of natural philosophy and of agricultural chemistry. In the more advanced classes we would allow less time to be occupied with theoretical grammar and geography, and would give the outlines of English history, and especially of the Colonial empire. But the history should not be confined to the history of the nation so much as to the history of such of the arts, manufactures, and discoveries as have a practical bearing upon the business of life. Such subjects as algebra and geometry (theoretical and practical) and mental arithmetic should also be taught, and lessons should be given on common things. In the lower classes, the aim should be rather to awaken an interest which might lead to a desire on the part of the pupils to proceed to the higher work of the school. The mass of scholars cannot be expected to acquire more than is forced upon them; but the work of the school should be so managed as to take care that the information acquired by the dull and unwilling should be of a useful character, and that, as to the brighter intellects, every encouragement should be afforded them to attain a knowledge as extensive as the system is capable of conveying.
Quality of Instruction.—Although opinions are divided regarding the quality of the instruction now given in State schools as compared with that imparted under the common schools system, there can be no doubt that the present mode of carrying out the examinations for results has an injurious effect upon both teachers and taught. The teachers having in view these examinations prepare their pupils by storing their minds with dry facts and bald rules, thus neglecting the cultivation and fostering of the reasoning powers and general intelligence of the children. If, however, the alterations which we recommend in the programme of subjects and in the result system be adopted, we feel convinced that in this respect a marked improvement will immediately follow.

Singing.—We are of opinion that singing is a most important branch of school discipline. It is almost the only portion of the curriculum that exercises the emotions, and it is of the highest value in engaging the united interest of the children, and in fostering in them a national spirit. It would appear from the evidence that the singing lessons, which are given in the infant classes, are altogether discontinued in the second class (and sometimes also in sections of the first and third classes), and that they are resumed only when the children are brought under the instruction of the visiting singing-master in the third class—thus at the age when such teaching and practice are essential this instruction is withheld. We think this a mistake, and we would therefore recommend that singing should be taught to all children attending the State schools, and that where possible, in the junior classes, the principles of music should be taught, and the exercises conducted, by qualified assistants. We would allow no child to absent himself from the singing lesson, as it has been shown by skilled witnesses that although some children at first may appear to be unable to learn singing, yet that after practice they, in most cases, acquire a taste for and become proficient in the art. The evidence shows that the system of visiting teachers is on the whole superior to that of the ordinary staff to give musical instruction—it should therefore be continued. But, as in many districts the system is inapplicable, we would recommend that the Department should, for the present, endeavour as far as possible to have in each school a teacher capable of giving instruction in the subject, and that in future singing should be included in the syllabus of examination for the pupil-teacher course, although we would not make it a compulsory subject; also, that encouragement should be given to the teachers now in the service to qualify themselves to impart instruction in singing. Were this done, in the course of a few years, instruction in singing would be imparted to the children in the country schools as well as to those in the larger centres of population; a love for the art would be engendered and fostered, and the tastes of the scholars thereby elevated and refined. From the evidence it appears that two methods of teaching singing are adopted in State schools—the tonic-sol-fa and the numeral systems—the singing-masters being left free to adopt that which he prefers. The adherents of each claim that the system used by them has special virtues, which, in their opinion, entitle it to be adopted as the one method to be used in all schools, but as the aim of both systems is to qualify the children to read music without the aid of the method by which they have been taught, we see no good reason for recommending the adoption of one system to the exclusion of the other.

Drawing.—Drawing, we think, should be taught as an ordinary part of the daily curriculum: not, however, as an elegant accomplishment, but as a useful art, in order to be of especial service to those engaged in trades and manufactures. An amount of nearly four thousand pounds a year is at present spent upon drawing in the public schools with a very unsatisfactory result. There is no general system of a uniform and practical character under skilled supervision. Each visiting drawing-master teaches in his own district after his own fashion—the ordinary staff of inspectors seeming to take little or no cognizance of this subject as a prescribed portion of school study. We think that competent inspectors of drawing should be appointed to see that every child who can learn to write is also trained to draw. They should see that the capacity of each child has been developed, so as to use both eye and hand with intelligence and accuracy in the production of correct outline-form both from the flat and from the round in true perspective. We think that to this extent at least the teaching of drawing should be effectually carried out in the public schools. The evidence we have received conclusively shows that it is not so carried out at present. The visiting drawing-masters have a large portion of their time taken up in teaching the very early rudiments of the
art, when these might well be taught by the ordinary school teacher. Elementary
drawing should be one of the subjects in the examination for pupil-teachers, and in
each school there should be teachers capable of imparting instruction in drawing.
Arrangements in regard to regular and thorough inspection might probably be made
in an economical and effective manner by employing trained artists or advanced
students of the Melbourne Public Gallery, if they were, at the same time, allowed to
carry on private practice. A suitable room should be so arranged in each school with
regard to light and other matters as to be most serviceable for instruction in drawing.
In this room the classes should be assembled and grouped according to their pro-

ciency in drawing, so as, for example, a child fit for the sixth class in this subject
should not be kept back because he happens to be in the fourth only in other subjects.
We have been unable to obtain sufficient data to make a definite recommendation in
regard to conducting all art instruction, so far as it may be assisted by the State,
on some uniform economical basis; but we believe that the time is not far distant
when it will be found desirable to appoint an "Arts and Science Board," which shall
have legal supervision and control of State expenditure, not only in relation to primary
instruction in drawing in State schools, but to the more advanced teaching in Schools
of Design, and to effective artistic training in connexion with the Victorian National
Art Gallery.

Extra Subjects.—The teaching of extra subjects in State schools has been a
failure. It appears that, out of 1,737 schools, extra subjects are taught in 182 schools
only. If the improvements which we have suggested in the State-school curriculum
be introduced, we recommend that the regulations relating to extra subjects be
cancelled. The evidence shows that, if the teachers conscientiously do their duty, the
proper work of the school is quite sufficient without devoting any part of their
energies to instructing pupils in extra subjects after school hours.

Exhibitions.—The establishment of exhibitions for scholars trained under the
State-school system is doubtless the best mode of assisting those scholars who not
only show superior ability, but who require pecuniary assistance to enable them to
seek the higher education which may afford scope for their ability. There is,
however, one danger in reference to exhibitions, scholarships, and other like dis-
tinctions and benefits, which requires to be guarded against, and that is the tendency
of teachers to neglect the dullest scholars, who form the bulk of the school, in order
to force on the more clever and energetic scholars, who are likely to reflect greater
credit and honour upon the teacher. To counteract this, we would recommend that
the examinations for these exhibitions should be confined to subjects taught
gratuitously in State schools.

Moral Instruction.—We think that, apart from the general and more important
matter of religious influence upon the life of the children, that there is a general
instruction in morals, manners, and mode of life which should be insisted upon in all
schools, and which all teachers should be obliged to treat of as an important part of
their duty. For example, habits of punctuality and method and neatness in dress and
cleanliness of person should be taught and enforced, and the duty should be imposed
on every child of cultivating truthfulness, fair dealing, mutual respect and con-
deration for others, kindness to dumb animals, and obedience to all in authority.

Military Drill.—It appears from the regulations that military drill is encouraged
by the offer of an annual bonus to State-school teachers (holding the necessary
qualification) who act as instructors. We are of opinion that all male teachers and
pupil-teachers should be required to qualify themselves for giving such instruction,
and that in large centres of population the boys of the various schools should
occasionally meet for the purpose of being drilled in large bodies.

Gymnastics.—The expense of providing suitable gymnastic apparatus will
always be a hindrance to thorough instruction in this subject, but we are of opinion
that in future teachers should be required to give instruction in such gymnastic
exercises as can be taught without apparatus, or with simple appliances.

Needlework.—It is of great importance that good instruction in needlework
should be given to girls; but it should take a practical direction, such as darning and
mending; and, seeing the now general use of sewing machines, the art of cutting out
should be particularly attended to. We would suggest that an annual exhibition of
work be held at the schools (immediately before the Christmas recess), with prizes
for the best work to be awarded by ladies appointed by the local boards, as an
effective encouragement to this important branch of female education.
Character of Teachers.—The paramount importance of maintaining a high moral tone and character in those who are entrusted with the instruction of the young renders it essential that, whatever system is adopted in the selection and promotion of teachers, moral qualifications should be treated as of the highest importance. We would recommend that no person should be permitted to be received as a candidate for admission to any examination preparatory to entrance into any position as a teacher, without the fullest inquiry into the moral character of the candidate. It should also be an invariable rule of the Department that evidence of any immorality in a teacher should, after proper inquiry, lead to the dismissal of the teacher. The evidence which we have taken has created the impression in us that the heads of the Department and the inspectors have been inclined to pay more attention to intellectual qualifications and aptness in the art of teaching than to the moral conduct of the teacher. In the earlier stage of our inquiry, some instances were given in evidence of clever and apt teachers, who had been guilty of misconduct, having been removed from the school in which they then were to some other school—generally a smaller one—after the establishment of impropriety of conduct reported by inspectors, and entered in the records of the Department. The attention which this evidence attracted has, we believe, caused a discontinuance of this leniency, and teachers who have since been found guilty of moral delinquency have been dismissed, instead of being removed to other schools. Whilst we feel it to be our duty to urge the great importance of this subject, and the necessity of the severest strictness in dealing with any moral delinquency in a school teacher, we feel that it is due to the State-school teachers as a class to express our opinion, from an investigation of their records, that the percentage of teachers who have misconducted themselves is certainly not higher than that in any other profession or class of society. In so large a body of persons, however great the care which may be taken, some evil instances will be found; but what we wish to urge upon Your Excellency's consideration is, that whilst in other classes offences may be condoned, yet, from the nature of the duties of a teacher of the young, and from the widely-spread baneful effects of the slightest evil influence in school teachers, it is necessary that no latitude should be tolerated, and that none but persons of thoroughly good character should be admitted into this branch of the service.

Female Teachers.—We have taken evidence in reference to the relative advantages of the employment of men and of women as teachers. For the younger children, we have no doubt that women are more fitted. In the higher classes, if, as the weight of evidence would seem to indicate, girls should be taught in separate classes, we would suggest that women should be employed as their teachers. But in every case in which women are employed as teachers some rules should be observed in reference to married women. From the evidence we have taken and the returns obtained, it would appear that the wives of men without occupation and of men in various occupations altogether outside the profession of teaching are employed. We think that this is very undesirable, and that, if married women are employed at all, it should be, as far as practicable, only where their husbands are also teachers in the same school, and that even in such cases a declaration should be required that the wife (except in the case of a workmistress) is not engaged in the performance of household duties. Several witnesses gave evidence of the physical incapacity for their school work of women exhausted by the labour of domestic duties.

Pupil-teachers.—For a State-school teacher, we are of opinion that there is no better preparation than the pupil-teacher course; but we think that the pupil-teacher course should be extended, so as to lead up to a standard equivalent to the end of the present first year's course of training, and that on passing the final examination of the course the pupil-teacher should then be entitled to a certificate of competency. Whether the suggestion for the extension of the pupil-teacher's course be adopted or not, we recommend the lessening of the ordinary school-work of the pupil-teachers, as the evidence of eminent head teachers and inspectors shows that the health of the pupil-teachers, especially of the females, is often seriously impaired under the present system. This could be easily accomplished by allowing the head teacher, at his discretion, to dispense with their services.
at such times as he might consider he could do so without interfering with the proper work of the school, a course which has been recommended, in their evidence, by some of the most experienced head teachers.

Course of Training.—We are of opinion that for the profession of teaching a regular system of training and examination is necessary, but we see no sound reason why the expense of the training and examination should not be borne by the candidates for the scholastic profession, as it is for the other professions. We would therefore recommend that the present practice of paying trainees should be discontinued, and also that the associated schools should be abolished. We would further recommend that any person who should pass the entrance examination, and pay fees for instruction, should be allowed to enter the Training Institute and to pursue his studies there at his own cost, and present himself for examination for a trained teacher’s certificate, whether intending to follow the scholastic profession as a State schoolmaster or as a private teacher. We would, however, make an exception to this rule in the case of pupil-teachers who pass the final examination of the pupil-teacher course and desire to obtain the trained teacher’s certificate. These should be admitted to the Training Institute free of expense to themselves.

VIII. Inspection.

Inspector-General.—From the evidence it appears that the time of this officer is almost wholly occupied with office work. We are of opinion that the most important part of his duty should be to direct and control the staff of inspectors, and for this purpose he should systematically visit schools while the inspection is going on. He should especially make himself acquainted with the suggestions of the head teachers and with the relations subsisting between them and the inspectors. He should preside at the annual conferences of inspectors, and submit the report thereof to the Minister, together with an annual report prepared by himself. In order that he may devote the necessary time to these duties, we recommend that the Inspector-General be relieved of the greater part of the office work which is now imposed upon him.

Qualification of Inspectors.—Whilst it is of the highest importance that gentlemen selected for the office of inspector should be men of considerable scholastic attainments, it is also essential that they should possess a practical acquaintance with school management. In the case of persons previously engaged in the management of schools, it would be unnecessary that they should, after selection for the office of inspector, go through any probation in State-school management; but in the case of candidates selected directly from the University, on account of their academical distinction, we would recommend that they should be required, after nomination for the office, but before confirmation, to pass through a course of probation for a period of six months, so as to enable them to acquire practical experience in the management of schools. This would get rid of the numerous complaints which will be found in the answers of the teachers (a summary whereof is published as Appendix A), that some of the inspectors, although they may find fault with the teacher’s method, fail to point out any remedy. While on this subject, we think it would be desirable if inspectors were to act more as friendly advisers to teachers than, as would appear from the answers of teachers, some of the inspectors have hitherto done. Inspectors also should be careful, in their bearing towards teachers, to set an example to the scholars of the respect due to the teacher. We think that the selection for the office of inspector should not be limited to teachers, but that where the choice lies between two men of equal literary ability and acquirements, as ascertained by examination, the one a State-school teacher, the other a man who had never been engaged in school management, the State-school teacher should be preferred.

Inspection of State Schools.—Next to the work of the teachers themselves, the work of the inspectors is the most important. The staff of inspectors should be complete, and sufficient for the work which it has to do. The assistant inspectors should assist the inspectors in the performance of their duties, and should not have separate districts assigned to them. The evidence taken by us in reference to inspection established the following facts—that the staff was insufficient in number for the thorough discharge of its duties, and that the visits of inspectors were too few, and wanting in regularity. To be effective, inspection should, in our opinion, be not less frequent than twice in each year; one of these visits should be at a fixed
time, for the purpose of examination in the intellectual attainments of the scholars; the other, at a time when not necessarily expected by the teacher, and should be directed to ascertaining the moral tone and general management of the school.

Records of Teachers.—These records are closely connected with the business of inspection. They are supposed to contain, amongst other things, the recorded result of the inspector's observation of the conduct and fitness of the teacher. The evidence satisfies us that the mode of making the entries on these records is imperfect—in one instance the extract from the inspector's report was entered in the record of the wrong person. We are strongly of opinion, seeing that the record for or against the teacher stands for all time, that the greatest care should be taken to ensure that the inspector's opinion of the teacher appears on the record. We would recommend that the entries in the teacher's records should be made by a responsible officer of the Department; that such entries should be afterwards checked, and, if detrimental, a copy thereof should at once be sent to the teacher concerned. We are also of opinion that every teacher should be entitled to receive a copy of his record on payment to the Department of a small fee.

IX. Local Control.

The powers and functions of Boards of Advice seem to us to form a prominent part of the machinery necessary for efficiently carrying out the provisions of the Education Act.

Sections 14 and 15 of the Act define the powers and duties of Boards of Advice, and section 18 empowers the Governor in Council to make regulations for "carrying this Act into effect," but up to the present time no regulations have been made for carrying into effect the provisions of section 15. The various Boards of Advice have therefore been left to their own devices as to how their duties should be fulfilled, and they complain that the Education Department has not at any time given facilities for the exercise of their proper functions, but, on the contrary, has shown a disposition to ignore their existence. For example, the Act requires Boards of Advice to report on the condition of school premises, whether new schools are required, and as to books, furniture, gymnastic appliances, or other requirements, but the Department, it appears, has always adopted the practice of sending special officers to report on the condition of school premises when such reports were required. New schools have been established without consulting the local Board of Advice, and existing schools have been entirely closed without even communicating the fact to the Board of the district affected thereby.

Again, the Act requires Boards of Advice to compare the attendance of children at school with the roll for the school district; but this important duty could not be performed, because the Department failed to supply the roll for the school district, and no provision was made to enable Boards of Advice to prepare such rolls for themselves.

The members of Boards of Advice throughout the colony appear to have been much dissatisfied with this state of affairs; and, in the year 1879, a general conference was held in Melbourne, at which important resolutions were passed, and ordered to be brought under the notice of the Minister of Public Instruction.

A second general conference was held in the year 1881, at which the resolutions of the previous conference were re-affirmed and other resolutions passed. This conference appointed a council of fifteen members, and passed a resolution requesting the Minister to recognise this council as representative of Boards of Advice throughout the colony, and to grant free railway passes for members of council in country districts to enable them to attend quarterly meetings in Melbourne. The Minister acceded to the terms of this resolution, and the council has done much useful work, e.g., a set of questions was prepared and submitted to every Board of Advice throughout the colony, and the replies thereto were analyzed and classified by the council, and submitted in the form of a report, which forms Appendix B (a) and (b), attached hereto, and we acknowledge that our labours have been materially lightened by having presented to us, in so concise a form, the opinions of Boards of Advice generally on the questions submitted to them.

A third general conference of Boards of Advice was held in the month of July, 1883, and we have been favoured with copies of its proceedings. That the general effect of these conferences has been good is shown by the fact that, in his last Annual
Report, the Minister of Public Instruction acknowledges that "the number of Boards who voluntarily undertake this duty"—viz., the enforcement of the compulsory clause—"is still steadily increasing." However, a careful study of the evidence convinces us that Boards of Advice, as at present constituted, do not fulfil the important functions prescribed by section 15 of the Act, and that the compulsory clause is very ineffectively enforced in some districts. From returns supplied to us we gather that a large number of schools are seldom visited by Boards of Advice, and some are neglected altogether.

As some remedy for this state of things, we would recommend that, in lieu of Boards of Advice, a school committee be established for each and every school throughout the colony; such committee to consist of not more than five members, to be elected by the ratepayers of the district in which the schools are situated. The duties of these committees would be to visit regularly the schools under their care, and report to the Provincial School Boards hereinafter recommended to be established; and it would be advisable to give each and every school committee the power of expending on necessary and urgent repairs sums not exceeding on the whole £5 in any one year.

We further recommend that the colony shall be divided into school districts, the number of which should not exceed twenty; and that these districts should be managed by Boards to be called Provincial School Boards, such Boards to be corporations, having perpetual succession and a common seal. These Boards should consist of not less than five and not more than twelve members, who would be elected by the school committees in the different districts. A central town in each district would be selected where the Board would hold its meetings and carry on its business. We would suggest that a secretary should be appointed by each Board, at a salary not exceeding £50 a year, whose duties should be defined by regulations. The Provincial School Boards should have the responsibility of seeing that the rolls of children of school age in the districts under their control were properly compiled, and should also have the appointment of truant officers for their district, and such local superintendents of truant officers as might be found necessary, and should fix, subject to the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction, the amount of remuneration payable to each truant officer and local superintendent. These Boards should also have the power, on the complaint of a teacher, and after due inquiry, to expel or forbid the attendance of any child who, from gross misconduct or incorrigible disobedience, might be considered an injurious or dangerous example to the other scholars; and such child should then be liable to be brought before the nearest court of petty sessions, and committed to the industrial or reformatory school for a certain term.

In addition to the duties at present appertaining to Boards of Advice, these Provincial Boards should be empowered to inquire into the condition of school buildings, with the view of keeping them in thorough repair, and to receive applications for new schools, and report thereon to the Minister. The money necessary for the exercise of these functions would be voted by Parliament for the purpose, but there would be a corresponding reduction in the amount voted for expenditure by the Education Department. Not only would the central department be thus relieved of the pressure of matters which could be better attended to by local bodies, but we believe the work would be more economically and more efficiently performed. We think that it would give general satisfaction, and be highly advantageous, to afford the Provincial Boards the power of investigating any complaints that may be made regarding the conduct of teachers by persons other than officers of the Department, and afterwards report the result of their inquiry to the Minister, with their recommendations. These Boards should also have the power of suspension of teachers for immorality (including drunkenness), a power at present possessed, but clogged with the duty of reporting to the Minister, who can proceed in his own way to determine whether the suspension should be upheld or not. We would propose that the suspension should be followed with dismissal, unless the teacher, within a prescribed time, applied for a Board (nominated by the Governor in Council). In the event of the Board so appointed confirming the action of the Local Board, the teacher should be dismissed the service. In the event of the Local Board's suspension being reversed, then the teacher should not be removed from the district, unless in due course of promotion or at his own request. By encouraging teachers in their duties, and protecting them against frivolous complaints, we believe that the Provincial Boards and the teachers would work harmoniously together to promote the efficiency of the Educational system.
We have only sketched what we consider should be the powers and functions of the Provincial School Boards, as we think that their duties in detail can be better defined by Your Excellency's Advisers. The object we have in view in making these recommendations is to effect an improvement by modifying the extreme centralization of the present system, and thereby evoking and encouraging a healthy spirit of enthusiasm among the people of the colony with regard to their schools. In every country in the world it has been found that schools in which the people take the most lively interest are the most efficiently conducted and of the best moral tone. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that our schools should have the advantage of this kind of help, and we believe it is only to be attained and preserved by giving the people of every district a direct voice in matters connected with school management.

Transfers of Children.—A practice appears to prevail to a very great extent which we think is of a most mischievous character—it consists in the capricious removal of children from one State school to another. The evidence has shown us that in some cases children would only remain for a few days or weeks at one school, and then, of their own volition, or by the caprice of their parents, remove to another school. It is clear such a course must be detrimental, not only to the scholastic advancement of the scholar, but also to the influence of the teacher, and destructive of respect for the school authority, as well as subversive of discipline. We would suggest that no scholar should be permitted during the currency of a quarter to leave one school to go to another, except in the case of a change in the residence of the parents, which would make the continuance at the school to the end of the quarter a serious inconvenience; and that in every case of a child withdrawing from a school before the compulsory standard was obtained, that the head teacher should issue a certificate, with the name of the child, age, and number of attendances, and also stating the conduct and character of the child, and the advancement in education which it had made, and that the child so removing to a fresh school should produce such certificate to the head teacher of the latter school. In private schools, parents cannot capriciously remove their children during the currency of a quarter without a pecuniary loss to themselves, and this restraint operates favorably upon the discipline of private schools. There is no reason why a greater laxity in this respect should be permitted in State schools, and we are satisfied that much of the want of discipline among the rising generation is to be traced to the idea in the minds of children that, if their masters and mistresses at school offend them, they can choose some other school. They thus grow up with an idea that, instead of having to treat their teachers and elders with respect, their teachers and elders must pay deference to them, in order to secure their good-will. The effect of this cannot but result in undutiful and rebellious conduct.

Truant Officers and Truancy.—We are of opinion that all truant officers should be made inspectors of factories, so that they may have the power to enter the factory at all times, in order to make inquiries as to the children of school ages there. They should also have power to take children of school ages whom they find loitering or playing in the streets during school hours to their parents or to schools which the children profess to attend. We also think that the truant officer should in all cases be the summoning officer, a change which would throw the duty of the prosecution more completely upon the truant officer, instead of leaving it, as at present, a divided duty between the truant officer and the police. Elsewhere we have recommended that truant officers should be under the control of the Provincial Boards, and that these Boards should appoint local superintendents, whose duty it would be to visit the different districts, see the truant officers at work, and advise the Provincial Boards generally as to the working of the compulsory clauses of the Act. The evidence taken satisfies us that truancy to a great extent exists, but if the alterations in the Act which we have suggested were carried out, it would be in a great measure checked.

X. Compulsory Clause.

Compulsory School Ages.—The present Act makes the compulsory ages for attendance at school, unless the necessary certificate of efficiency has been attained, from six years to fifteen years. We do not propose to alter the age for compulsory first attendance at school. As, however, we are satisfied from the evidence that children...
of the most ordinary capacity, if sent to school at six or seven years old, should, with regular attendance, attain the compulsory standard necessary for a certificate at from twelve to thirteen years; and as we are of opinion that every child should at least attain the compulsory standard, we would recommend that, if it had not done so at the age of thirteen, the parent should be compelled to pay for his child's education until it had either obtained its certificate or had reached the age of fifteen years. The careless parent should, in our opinion, bear the cost of the school instruction of his child beyond the age at which ordinary attention would have enabled the child to have obtained the necessary certificate. On the other hand, if children attained their certificates at the age of thirteen years, or at an earlier age, they should be entitled, if they desired to do so, to continue to receive gratuitous instruction up to, but not beyond, the age of fifteen years, as we are of opinion that by that age a scholar should have fully mastered the State-school programme. Not only would a saving in a wasteful expenditure upon the children of parents negligent of their duty be effected, but a direct reward would be offered to the diligent who might wish to prolong their studies beyond the limited attainments necessary for the certificate of having attained the compulsory standard.

Minimum Standard of Education.—It must always be borne in mind that there is a distinction in the Act between the compulsory standard of education and the standard of education which may be attained in the State schools. We do not propose any interference with the right of all parents to obtain the advantages of the gratuitous instruction offered by the State; but we are of opinion that the abuse of that right should be checked by legislation. The title of the certificate, viz., "Certificate of a Child being Sufficiently Educated," is very misleading, and might induce parents to consider that a complete education had been acquired, when, probably, only rudimentary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic had been attained. This amount of instruction is as much as a large proportion of the children of the colony will ever be disposed to receive; but as the State school offers to those who are able and willing to avail themselves of it a more advanced education, we would recommend that the title of the certificate under the second schedule of the Act should be changed so as to represent what it really is, viz., "Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Attendance," and that such certificates should be issued only to those who make application for them.

Minimum Attendance.—It is clear that insufficient attendance must delay the acquisition of the compulsory standard of education, and it is also beyond dispute that this delay puts the State to unnecessary expense, which should, in our opinion, fall exclusively upon the negligent parents. We therefore recommend that the number of days compulsory attendance be increased from thirty to forty-five days per quarter, and that the Provincial School Boards be empowered in special cases (such as when the services of children are required for hop-picking or harvesting operations) to allow insufficient attendance during one quarter to be made up at other times during the year.

School Census.—From the passing of the Act to the present time accurate and reliable district rolls of children between school ages have been wanting. Two attempts have been made to compile a census at a cost of about £3,000 each, but both were failures; a third attempt had occupied the time of twelve clerks for two years, so that, even if correct, by the time it was completed, it would be out of date. Thus Mr. Brown, the Secretary to the Department, in his evidence states that he "thought the census of so little value that he did not take a note of the number of children."

Had never known the number of children not attending any school.

We think the work could be better performed by requiring the rate assessors, when leaving notices of assessment, to leave also forms to be filled up by the householder with all the necessary information as to the children domiciled in the house. The papers should be collected, and then the district roll of each municipality would be made up from these returns, but this work should be done locally and not in the central office. Copies of the district roll should be made available for reference. The residences of all children in each school would thus be registered, and in this manner every child of school age in the municipality would be accounted for.

Truant Officers and Truancy.—These subjects are treated of under the head of Local Control, supra.

Prosecutions and Fines.—We think that section 14 of the Act is defective in not fixing a minimum fine in cases of second and subsequent convictions for neglect of parents to send their children to school. We recommend that for a second offence
the minimum fine should be £5, and for a third or subsequent offence the maximum fine should be increased to £5, and the minimum fine fixed at 10s. It is in evidence before us that parents frequently attend at the court several times in the year, and pay the trifling fines imposed, their children's labour making it profitable to do so.

PART II.—RELIGION IN RELATION TO EDUCATION.

In connexion with this part of our inquiry, we deemed it advisable to address circulars to the heads of the various religious denominations throughout the colony, asking them to nominate representatives who should attend to give evidence before the Commission on behalf of their respective denominations.

The Free Presbyterians, Unitarians, Baptists, Bible Christians, and Congregationalists declined to nominate any representatives; and from the following denominations no reply to the circular was received, viz.:-The Free Primitive and Methodist New Connexion, and the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Witnesses, both clerical and lay, were sent by the following denominations, viz.:-The Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, the Wesleyan Church, the Lutheran Church, the Society of Friends, the Hebrew Church, and the Roman Catholic Church. Other witnesses, not specially nominated by their respective denominations, were also examined.

The evidence specially referring to this part of our inquiry has been numbered and printed separately from the general evidence.

(1) Religious Instruction in State Schools.

We have throughout this branch of our inquiry had presented to our minds two considerations—the one, the fact that the education of the young without the inculcation of moral principles based upon the authority of God is defective and imperfect; the other, that as this colony consists of persons of the most diverse religious opinions, and as the Constitution of the colony recognises no distinctive religious belief, the introduction of any religious teaching into the schools is a question of great difficulty.

We are satisfied, from the evidence given before us by the several persons sent to us as the representatives of various religious denominations in the colony, as also by other independent evidence, that a very general desire exists in the minds of many parents in the colony that the difficulty of religious education in connexion with State schools should be grappled with, and that it should be so treated that the benefits of a general system of instruction in secular subjects should be maintained in its integrity, whilst, at the same time, the necessity for the religious instruction of the young should be recognised, and such facilities afforded in the State schools themselves as are compatible with the principle of complete religious toleration and non-interference by the Government in the religious differences which exist amongst the various religious denominations in the colony.

In directing our attention to this most important branch of our inquiry, we have recognised the existence of the principle that all religious denominations shall be treated upon an equality of independence and freedom from restraint in matters of conscience. Keeping this principle in view, we have considered what additional facilities might be afforded for the giving of religious instruction to the children attending State schools.

The majority of the witnesses representing the various religious denominations expressed the opinion that the absence of religious instruction from the State schools had a very injurious effect on the children, and they earnestly urged that the school curriculum should be extended so as to include specific religious lessons. They admitted, however, that they had not visited State schools for the purpose of observing the system of instruction adopted, or the conduct of the children while under instruction or in the playground. They appeared to be unaware of the extent to which lessons on religious subjects are distributed through the reading books used in the schools, and, when examined on this point, one of the leading witnesses stated that he did not know that there were lessons in the school books teaching children that they ought to pray to God night and morning.

We have carefully examined the whole of the reading books used in the schools, and find that they contain many lessons of a religious character, and the evidence of
State-school teachers prove that these lessons are taught in the schools. One teacher, in answer to questions, stated that the necessity or benefit of prayer was explained, and added—

"I would always encourage teachers not to lose an opportunity of inculcating upon such points, by which we reach the children's hearts. . . . I cannot understand any teacher giving an explanation every one point brought out."

Other teachers gave similar evidence, of which the following are specimens:—

"Well, suppose I took a boy into my room, and seriously investigated, say a case of lying, I certainly appeal to him in this way, that although he may deceive me, he cannot deceive God."

"We endeavour to illustrate all matters in the reading lessons, whether religious or otherwise."

"Referring to a lesson on prayer—"I should ask, 'What are we taught to do in this?' 'To pray.' Taught to pray how? 'Continually.' 'And what are we taught to pray for?' 'Grace.' 'And what is meant by grace?' 'Favour,' or some explanation of that sort; and then we are asked to be ready to forgive—we should explain that."

"If the word "prayer" cropped up in a lesson, I would explain it as well as I could, without reference to any particular church, and say what I understood by prayer, and the overruling providence of God. I should refer to it in so far as the passage would allow me."

"Undoubtedly I explain the sentiment" ("of the decidedly religious lessons"), "and not only that, but elaborate it by practical instances." "Undoubtedly I would, and explain what prayer means." "And returning thanks for mercy?" "Undoubtedly I would impress that on them, and be glad of the opportunity."

On the other hand, some of the teachers stated that they treated these lessons simply as reading lessons. The following extracts are given as specimens:—

"Simply as reading lessons—none of my teachers make any comments by way of religious instruction. . . . The explanation is more as to the meaning of words, not as to teaching of doctrine . . . ?"

"I explain them simply as grammatical terms, without entering into any doctrinal teaching whatever."

We have considered it desirable to forward with our Report (see Appendix C) a series of extracts from the reading books at present used in the State schools. A perusal of these extracts is sufficient to prove that, in the administration of the Education Act, the term "secular instruction" has not been defined so narrowly as to exclude all religious instruction, and to show the extent to which such instruction has formed part of the school curriculum. Several witnesses, however, urged that in the present state of the law it would be possible for the Minister of Public Instruction to eliminate all religious references from the books, and they referred to the fact that a former Minister did expunge certain lessons having reference to Christianity (see Appendix D). We think it is much to be regretted that the Minister should have done this without consulting Parliament, and are of opinion that legal provision should be made to prevent any alteration of the text-books in future without the sanction of Parliament. In order to prevent any doubt as to the meaning of the term "secular instruction," &c., we recommend that the Act be amended by inserting an interpretation clause, such as the following, viz.:—"That the term 'secular instruction' as used in the Act shall include general religious teaching of a non-sectarian character."

Many of the witnesses testified to the value of giving a specific time to religious instruction from the Bible or some recognised book of selected Scripture lessons, so that the children might know that the instruction given was distinctly religious. We cannot see the slightest objection to this being done, provided that parents having conscientious reasons be allowed to withdraw their children from such instruction. We therefore recommend that the hours for secular instruction be not interfered with,—viz., two hours in the forenoon and two hours in the afternoon—and that provision be made in the school curriculum for religious instruction of a non-sectarian character, either before or after the time set apart for secular instruction, with a conscience clause for the protection of both teachers and children. The text-books to be used might be the books of Scripture lessons issued by the National Board of Education of Ireland.

We further recommend that, during the time set apart for religious instruction of a non-sectarian character, the children of such parents as desire it may receive religious instruction separately, from some teacher approved by such parents, and that such separate instruction may include the teaching of the tenets of any sect.

We are also of opinion that the disability in regard to religious instruction under which the teachers now labour should be removed, and that those willing to do so should be permitted to give religious instruction in the State-school buildings in other than the ordinary school hours.
(II.) The Alleged Grievances of a portion of the Population.

The opinions held by the Roman Catholic Church in this colony with regard to the Education Act are totally distinct from the views of others who advocate the introduction of religious teaching in the State schools. The evidence taken by us shows that nothing will satisfy the authorities and the majority of the members of that Church except the payment out of the Education Vote of certain sums of money in support of their separate schools.

We have entered most fully into the matter, and have examined a large number of witnesses delegated by the different Roman Catholic dioceses throughout the colony. Their evidence shows us that the Roman Catholics spend large sums of money in maintaining separate schools of their own. Since 1872, when the Education Act came into operation, they appear, from returns furnished to us, to have expended the large sum of £265,552. They consider themselves aggrieved that, while they expend so much on the education of their children without any aid from the Government, State schools, which they have no desire to use, should be supported out of the general revenue, to which they contribute in common with their fellow-citizens. All these witnesses concur in the view that aid should be granted to their schools in the form of a payment by results, to be ascertained by periodical examinations in secular subjects of the children in attendance, and they are unanimous in expressing the opinion that the giving of facilities for religious instruction in State schools by their clergy and authorized laity would not satisfy their requirements. The children of Roman Catholics, they say, must be educated in schools under the authority of their Church, and that in these schools the doctrines of the Church must permeate the whole of the instruction given.

Pope Pius IX., in the syllabus appended to his Encyclical of December 8th, 1864, reprobrates, proscribes, and condemns a number of propositions, and, amongst others, proposition 48th, which is as follows:—"Catholics may approve of a system of educating youth unconnected with the Catholic faith and the power of the Church, and which regards the knowledge of merely natural things and only, or at least primarily, the ends of earthly social life." The reprobation, proscription, and condemnation of this proposition are held to bind on the consciences of all the members of the Roman Catholic Church; and, therefore, they feel bound to maintain their separate schools. At the same time, in districts where there is no separate school, Roman Catholic parents are held by the Church to have an excuse for sending their children to State schools.

We have had no evidence as to the number of Roman Catholic children attending State schools; but, from the census returns, it appears that on 4th April, 1881, there were in all the schools of the colony 157,191 children, and of these, 16,430 were in Roman Catholic schools, 11,704 in private schools, and 129,057 in State schools. Assuming that the number of Roman Catholic children bore the same proportion to the total number of children at school as the number of Roman Catholics in the colony bore to the total population, it would appear that a greater number of Roman Catholic children were being educated in State schools than were to be found in their own separate schools.

One point worthy of notice in connexion with the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards the State-school system is that while "all faithful Catholics are called upon to reprobe, proscribe, and condemn it," yet there is no objection to members of that Church acting as teachers in State schools under the existing system. A leading witness says—"It is the teaching as affecting the children that is condemned; the teachers are only discharging an official duty for which they are paid." It is in evidence that about one-fourth of the State-school teachers are Roman Catholics.

In dealing with the question of the expenditure of money from the general revenue, it would be quite impracticable to take into consideration claims made by churches, societies, or any other combination of individuals, to be specially dealt with on the basis of their contributions as citizens to such revenue. Such a method of dealing with expenditure would gradually lead to the disorganization of the State. Yet some of the witnesses urged that because Roman Catholics contributed to the general revenue, and the education of the people is paid for out of such revenue, therefore they should receive a certain portion of the money expended on education in support of their separate schools, and more than one witness went so far as to advocate a division of the vote for education, based upon the proportion of Roman Catholics to the total population.
In a Roman Catholic school, everything is subordinated to the inculcation of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, it being the first object of the teacher to make the pupil a good Catholic. Such being the case, any payment by the State to Roman Catholics towards the education of their children would be tantamount to endowment by the State of that particular form of religion. We fully sympathize with the Roman Catholics in their difficulty; but, as it is purely a Church difficulty, it cannot be remedied by the State in a country where State aid to religion has been abolished by the will of the people.

In any general system of education supported by the State, it is obvious that only such subjects should be taught as are acceptable to the great mass of the people. In this respect, it is a great tribute to our State-school system to find that the witnesses who are most opposed to it as a system have no fault to find with the subjects actually taught; their objection is that something they desire is not taught, namely, the particular doctrines of their own church. In other words, their objection cuts at the root of any general system of State education; and as the only way of meeting that objection would be to recognize denominational schools as entitled to aid from the State, we are unable to make any recommendation to Your Excellency on the subject.

**BUSINESS OF THE COMMISSION.**

We have held 109 meetings. A full list of dates of such meetings (together with those of the committees appointed by the Commission), and attendances of each Commissioner, will be found in Appendix K (a), (b), and (c). It will be observed that Mr. William Peterson attended no meeting, having been absent from the colony during the whole time the Commission sat. Mr. Henty has been unable to attend since his appointment as President of the Melbourne Hospital, as unfortunately the day most convenient to the other members of the Commission (Tuesday) is that on which the Hospital meetings are held. Dr. Cutts was absent in Europe for some months, and since his return he has not felt, owing to such absence, justified in taking part in the final recommendations. The Hon. J. Maegregor was absent during our later sittings, owing to dangerous illness, which, we regret exceedingly, terminated fatally. His matured judgment was of the greatest assistance in our discussions, and his courteous demeanour endeared him to his brother Commissioners. Our Chairman (Mr. Warrington Rogers, Q.C.) having been appointed acting Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of the Colony of Tasmania from the 1st February of this year, we elected Mr. Commissioner Templeton to temporarily fill the vacant position. Before the Chairman departed he prepared for our consideration a draft report, a great part of which, in reference to the administration, organization, and general condition of the existing system of Public Instruction, we have adopted and embodied in Part I. of this Report. We signified by resolution our appreciation of the energy, thoroughness, and heartiness displayed by Mr. Rogers in the conduct of the business of the Commission.

On the 11th May, 1882, a committee, consisting of Professor McCoy and Messrs. Archer and Love, was appointed to prepare questions to be submitted to head teachers of State schools. A set of questions was formulated and sent out to 1,737 head teachers, and replies were received from 1,525. These replies have been analyzed, and are published as Appendix A, and have been of much service to us in our deliberations.

On the 22nd November, 1882, we received a communication from Mr. E. Parnell, head teacher of State school No. 1278, La Trobe-street, Melbourne, stating that, in consequence of admissions made by him, when giving evidence before the Commission, he had received a letter of censure from the Education Department, which letter he forwarded, as also a letter received previously from the Department on the same subject. Deeming the action of the Education Department an attempt to intimidate a witness giving evidence before us, we suspended our inquiry to address Your Excellency, and requested that an Order in Council might be issued, protecting the witnesses who had already given, or who might thereafter give, evidence before us. The correspondence on the subject, together with the memorial and memorandum to Your Excellency, as also the Order in Council, as issued in accordance with our request, are published as Appendix I of our Report.
On the 22nd November, 1882, a deputation of the Council of Boards of Advice waited on us by appointment, and a report of the proceedings will be found in Appendix B (a) and (b).

On the 29th November, 1882, a deputation from the Bible in State Schools League waited on us by appointment, and a report of the proceedings will be found in Appendix F.

On the 22nd May, 1883, a committee, consisting of Messrs. Templeton, Love, and Archer, was appointed to sift the evidence taken and report on the points upon which it appeared to the committee further evidence was required. The committee held twenty-one meetings, and went exhaustively into the evidence, and furnished a report thereon. The analysis of the evidence prepared under the direction of this committee is referred to in the introduction to this our Report.

We have received in all forty-six returns from the Education Department, a list of which, arranged according to the subjects treated of, will be found in Appendix E, together with such of the returns or summaries thereof as we consider desirable to publish; and we beg, at the same time, to express our sense of the care and ability shown in the compilation by the Department of these returns.

We would here desire to express to Your Excellency our full appreciation of the readiness with which Mr. Brown, the Secretary of the Education Department, has always facilitated the inquiries which our duties required us to make. Our thanks are also due to the officers and teachers of the Department and other witnesses for the valuable information which is contained in their evidence.

When the room set apart for our sittings by the Government was required for some other purpose, we endeavoured to obtain accommodation in the Government buildings, but were informed that no other suitable room was available. We thereupon applied to His Worship the Mayor of Melbourne, who placed a room at the Town Hall at our disposal, where, since the 29th day of May, 1883, our meetings have been held; and we desire to record our thanks to the Mayor and the officers of the City Corporation for their uniform courtesy.

At one of our earlier meetings it was determined that it would be desirable to obtain from the Department, as Assistant Secretary to the Commission, some gentleman who was thoroughly conversant with the general work of the Department. Upon the recommendation of the then Acting Secretary (the late Inspector-General), we obtained the services of Mr. Francis Reddin. We wish to express to Your Excellency our sense of the ability, great industry, and zeal, accompanied by loyalty to the Department to which he is attached, of Mr. Reddin, and to recommend him for favourable consideration to any promotion which may be consistent with the exigencies of the Public Service.

In conclusion, we express to Your Excellency the hope that our labours may result in securing the improved education of the people.

We humbly submit to Your Excellency this our Third and Final Report.

J. M. TEMPLETON, Acting Chairman.*
(C.L.S.)

C. J. HAM.
(C.L.S.)

GEO. MEARES.
(L.S.)

FRANCIS ORMOND.
(L.S.)

DUNCAN LOVE.
(L.S.)

A. GRANT McINTYRE,
Secretary.

26 June, 1884.

* Subject to memorandum hereto attached.
MEMORANDUM OF J. M. TEMPLETON, MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

While I consider that the recommendations made under the head of the Result System would, if carried out, tend to improve the character of the instruction given in our schools, I am decidedly of opinion that, in the true interests of education, the system of "payment by results" should be abolished.

Twelve years of practical experience in a public school, first as an assistant-teacher under the National Board of Education, and afterwards as a head teacher under the "Common Schools Act"; and sixteen years of close observation since I gave up the scholastic profession (the last ten years as a member of a Board of Advice under the present Education Act), have convinced me that the result system has an injurious effect upon the teachers in directing their energies in narrow grooves, and a prejudicial effect on the children in exercising their minds in the acquirement of the knowledge of facts and of rules, rather than in training them to habits of observation and correct reasoning.

Under the result system, the children imbibe the idea that the object of their being taught is to enable them to pass examinations, and when they are successful in passing in all the subjects for the sixth or highest class, they consider their education to be finished. When they see their teachers straining every nerve to secure this result, it cannot be wondered at if many of the children consider it to be the highest aim of their school life to pass the inspector's examination. It is not thus that the minds of our young people will be developed and stimulated to high and noble conceptions. If a low standard of attainments be fixed—and this is one of the necessities of the system—it must result in producing false notions and paltry ideas of mental culture. The aim of our Education System should be to induce and encourage the pupils to exercise all their faculties in extending their knowledge and forming true ideas of men and things, and thus lay the foundation for that self-culture which distinguishes true education from mere instruction.

Then, as to the teachers, how can they maintain a spirit of enthusiasm in their work when they are continually preparing children for examination, the results of which are to determine their own salaries? To them the event of the year is the inspector's examination; and then they are filled with anxiety as to whether the little boy who caught cold and was absent yesterday will be present to-day, whether that little girl will be able to control her nervousness, and whether the inspector will put any catch questions; remembering that on these things depends the provision of food, clothing, and other comforts for their families during next year. If teachers are to have an exalted idea of their calling, they should be relieved of such anxieties as these. I do not know any profession in which enthusiasm is more called for and at the same time more effective in ensuring success than in that of a teacher. I am of opinion, therefore, that no pains should be spared by the inspectors to evoke and keep alive this spirit; but, to do this, the inspectors also must be enthusiasts—if they carry no fire, they cannot light any.

But the inspectors themselves are made the slaves of the result system; the very forms of their questions are laid down for them, in order to secure uniformity, and the work of examination becomes mere drudgery. In fact, the result system may be characterized as "Inspection made easy." I had an opportunity last year of observing the public school system of New South Wales, and of ascertaining the opinions of some of the inspectors and teachers of that colony on the subject of payment by results. The result system has never been adopted in New South Wales, and every one of whom I inquired was strongly opposed to its introduction. I was very much struck with a remark made by Mr. Johnson, the Chief Inspector, who
kindly accompanied me on my visits to several of the public schools. His remark was to this effect:—It is very easy to find out what has not been taught in a school, but the inspector's duty is to ascertain what has been taught, and that is not so easy. The result system appears to me to foster the easy part of inspection, and to discourage the more difficult, which is also the more important part.

A comparison of what I observed in New South Wales with what I have seen in our own schools has led me to the conclusion that, while the discipline in both is decidedly good, this discipline is maintained in the latter chiefly by the authority of the teachers, and in the former chiefly by the interest which the children take in the work of the school—the New South Wales children appear to do their work because they like it, the Victorian children because they must. This difference I attribute entirely to our system. Whether viewed as to its influence upon inspectors, upon teachers, or upon children, the result system is, in my opinion, baneful in its effects, and therefore I strongly recommend its total abolition. In support of this recommendation permit me to refer Your Excellency to the analysis of the evidence on this subject, and particularly to the evidence of Mr. Whyte, Mr. Stach, Mr. Smith, Mr. Nell, and Mr. Jones, who are State-school teachers of very long experience, all classified with Honours, and every one of them in charge of a very large school.

In conclusion, I desire to call the attention of Your Excellency to the evidence given by the witnesses who represented the various religious denominations. These witnesses, for the most part, stated that, in their opinion, the moral tone of the young people had deteriorated under the present Education system; but no specific evidence was produced in support of the opinion. The evidence of one of the leading witnesses will illustrate the manner in which such opinions have been formed:—Q. 110. I have not made systematical inquiry as to the moral tone, but it is the general impression produced on my mind by pretty wide observation. Q. 131. I scarcely ever visited any of the present State schools. Q. 132. I have not observed the demeanour of the children in the play-ground or in the schools, but I have heard a great deal of it.

A striking illustration of the danger of accepting hearsay evidence is to be found in the evidence of the Bishop of Melbourne (Dr. Moorhouse), in reference to the alleged throwing of books at a clergyman, who was giving religious instruction in one of the State schools. It was not until after the taking of evidence had closed that I succeeded in getting the name of the clergyman to whom and the school in which the circumstances were said to have occurred. It appears that the Revd. Canon Handfield was the clergyman, and the school was the Central State schools. The Bishop stated that the affair happened four or five weeks before the 11th July, 1885. Now Canon Handfield had himself given evidence on the 5th July, and he had said, Q. 337, I am teaching now in the Central schools after school hours, but I have no very great confidence in what I am doing. Q. 338. There is attendance enough, but there is a terrible lack of discipline. Q. 339. It is after school, and the entire thing is voluntary; and boy nature is boy nature—wants to get to the play-ground. And another reason. I do not know the children yet, neither do they know me.

This was the evidence of Canon Handfield, but he did not say one word about throwing books. I asked for a report of the circumstances from the head teacher of the school. A copy of my letter, and of the reply of the head teacher, will be found among the Appendices.

A notable circumstance in connexion with the evidence of the representatives of the religious denominations was that they had not observed any falling-off in the number of young people who take an interest in church work, or in the work of Sunday schools; and, in regard to the Church of England, that there had been no falling-off in the number of young people coming forward for confirmation. I submit, therefore, that the evidence of these witnesses on the question of the moral and religious tone of the children attending State schools is entitled to very slight consideration as compared with the evidence of inspectors and teachers.

J. M. TEMPLETON. (L.s.)

26th June, 1884.
MEMORANDUM OF FREDERICK McCOY, WILLIAM HENRY ARCHER, EDMOND KEOGH, HENRY NICHOLAS LOUGHNAN, MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

We, Your Excellency's Commissioners, whose hands and seals are hereunto set, desire to state to Your Excellency that we cannot approve of the Report adopted by a majority of Your Commissioners present at a meeting of the Commission except so far as the same is adopted by our Chairman, Mr. Warrington Rogers, and we have therefore not signed the said Report.

As the Report of our Chairman expresses our opinions and the conclusions at which we have arrived after a careful consideration of the evidence given before the Commission, to avoid prolixity, we have the honour to state that we entirely concur with the annexed Report of our Chairman, Mr. Warrington Rogers, and humbly recommend the same to Your Excellency's consideration.

FREDERICK McCOY. (L.s.)
W. H. ARCHER. (L.s.)
EDMD. KEOGH. (L.s.)
H. N. LOUGHNAN. (L.s.)

26th June, 1884.

By Authority: John Faasen, Government Printer, Melbourne.