SECTION XXII.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

§ 1. Early History of Primary Education in Australia.

1. **Primary System of New South Wales.**—(i.) *Place of New South Wales in Australian Education.* The first settlement in Australia being in New South Wales, it is but natural that Australian education should have its beginnings in that State. In the evolution of educational method and system in Australia, New South Wales also has played a leading part, and had practically a dominating influence. For that reason a sketch of the evolution of education in New South Wales contains, as it were, the key to the understanding at the Australian attitude to this question.

(ii.) *Early Difficulties.*[1] Although the instructions issued to Governor Phillip, under whose supervision the first settlement in Australia was founded, contained the direction that 200 acres near every township should be reserved for the maintenance of a schoolmaster, and there were many children in the "First Fleet," no teacher was sent with that fleet, and it was not until 1792, four years after the foundation of the colony, that any interest in the well-being of the children was manifested. The first chaplain, the Rev. R. Johnson, lamenting the neglected condition of the children, suggested that educated persons might be found to undertake the duties of teachers, if means were provided to pay them. With this object he appealed to the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and that body granted the sum of £40—£10 for each of the four teachers.

The first building used as a school-house was that built as a church for the Rev. R. Johnson, and was wilfully burnt down. Governor Phillip states that in this building from 150 to 200 children were educated under the immediate superintendence of the clergyman. Governor Hunter seems to have been concerned about the juveniles of his charge, for, in his despatch dated August, 1796, he wrote that a "public school for the care and education of the children is much wanted to save them from certain ruin." Though the Ministry of the day turned a deaf ear to his appeals, the Church Society in London resolved to extend assistance to the new settlement, and to begin with holding out encouragement to schoolmasters and schoolmistresses as the most likely means of effecting a reformation. Very little, however, was done; and in March, 1802, Governor King reported "the children numbered 1002, and finer or more neglected children are not to be met with in any part of the world."

(iii.) *Voluntary Effort.* The first voluntary effort to establish a school was made at the Hawkesbury, the leading farming centre of the population. The settlers not having the means to erect a school-house, the Governor had it built at the expense of the Crown, and obtained from the settlers signatures to an instrument, engaging themselves and their heirs, etc., for the term of fourteen years to pay the annual sum of 2d. per acre for all lands granted by the Crown and held by them, for the purpose of providing a maintenance for such persons as might be appointed to teach the children. This is the first instance of a "school-rate" in Australia, and was imposed before a similar rate was thought of in England.

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1. The following sketch (paragraph ii. to viii.) is contributed by P. Board, M.A., Under-Secretary of Public Instruction, and Director of Education, New South Wales.

Governor Bligh appears to have shewn great interest in the education of youth. Writing in February, 1807, he refers to the work of regulating schools in the towns and watching over the rising generation, and states: "At present we are doing all in our power to educate the children, having nearly 400 of them under tuition in the different parts of the colony."

(iv.) *State Grants.* From 1810 schools were generally established by the various churches by means of grants from the State. This aid was derived from certain Customs duties called the "Orphan Dues," because the first charge upon them was for the maintenance and education of orphan children. The money was applied chiefly to the payment of teachers' salaries. Each school was wholly independent of others; there was no system or general aim prescribed by a competent authority. Religious instruction, including the Church Catechism, was universally given without regard to the denomination of the pupils; in point of fact, the schools were almost entirely Church of England institutions.

(v.) *Denominational Education.* In 1831 Sir Richard Bourke became Governor, and in his first address to the Legislative Council he recommended a liberal provision for the religious instruction and education of the people, and in 1836 he advised that the "Irish National System of Education" be introduced into the colony. Though the proposal was approved by the Home Government, and was warmly supported by Sir George Gipps, who succeeded Bourke, it was opposed so strongly that for several years nothing was accomplished except that the National System was brought under the notice of the colonists and its principles made familiar to them.

(*a*) *Advantage of a General System over a Denominational one.* In June, 1884, Mr. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke, carried a resolution in the Legislative Council appointing a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the state of education in the colony, and to devise means of placing the education of youth upon a basis suited to the wants and wishes of the community. In August following, the Committee reported that the state of education was extremely deficient. There were 25,676 children between the ages of 4 and 14, of whom 7642 received instruction in the State-aided denominational schools, and 4865 in private schools, leaving about 13,000 children who received no education at all. The report stated that the Committee were convinced of the superiority of a general over a denominational system, and therefore recommended that one uniform system be established for the whole of the colony, and that an adherence to that system should be made an indispensable condition under which alone aid should be granted. In support of these views, resolutions were carried in the Council, but only by a majority of one—"That it is advisable to introduce Lord Stanley's System of National Education"; "that in order to introduce this system, His Excellency the Governor be requested to appoint a Board of persons favourable to the introduction of Lord Stanley's National System of Education, and belonging to the different religious denominations: this Board to be invested with a very wide discretion as to the arrangements necessary for carrying the system into effect, and all funds to be henceforth applied for the purpose of education to be administered by them. The leading principle by which the Board of Education shall be guided is to afford the same facilities for education to all classes of professing Christians, without attempt to interfere with the peculiar religious opinions of any, or to countenance proselytism; and that the Board be incorporated."

(*b*) *Board of Denominational Education.* The supporters of the denominational system were strong enough to maintain the *status quo* till 1848, when the Board of National Education was incorporated, and to secure aid for their own schools. A Board of Denominational Education, consisting of one representative each from the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan Churches, was appointed to distribute the sums voted for the maintenance of denominational schools. The management of these schools was thus practically left to the heads of the denominations mentioned.

At this time the denominational schools were attended by 11,725 children, and the grant from State funds for the year 1847 was £8450. It should, of course, be borne in mind that New South Wales then included the territories known as Victoria and Queensland.

(vi.) *Inception of the National System.* The "National System" may therefore be said to have commenced in 1848, and by the end of that year four schools were under the supervision of the Board. In 1849 the number had increased to twenty-five. In 1850, the year before the colony of Victoria was formed, the returns were: National schools, 43 in operation, and 52 in course of formation; pupils enrolled, 2725; expenditure, £7300. In this expenditure a large balance brought forward from the previous year was included. Denominational schools, 184; pupils enrolled, 11,581; expenditure from State funds, £8350.

(*a*) *Rivalry of Systems.* For eighteen years these two educational bodies co-existed, created by the same authority and supplied with funds from the same source—the public Treasury. Each was of necessity the rival of the other, and in numerous instances competed for the same pupils. The progress of the one was secured at the expense of the other; and instead of mutual help and co-operation in the important work of education, jealousy of each other's success and division and consequent waste of means were the inevitable results. Numerous applications were made to the National Board for the establishment of schools, but as an indispensable condition was that one-third of the cost of building and equipment was to be contributed by the applicants, it can be easily understood that schools did not increase with great rapidity. In 1857 regulations for the establishment of non-vested schools, or schools not erected by or belonging to the Board, were introduced. These non-vested schools were instrumental in bringing the means of education into places where none would have otherwise existed, and met with such favour that, during the first year of their existence, sixty-six applications for aid were made. This marked increase brought the National System more widely before the public, and virtually decided the question that further legislation was necessary, and that the anomaly of dual Boards supported by State funds could no longer be continued. Several attempts to introduce a general system were made, but as the proposals tended to maintain to some extent the denominational system, they received little support either from the legislature or the public.

(vii.) *The New South Wales Public Schools Act of 1867.* It was not untill 1866, when Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Parkes introduced the "Public Schools Act,"[1] or "an Act to make better provision for Public Education," that the long desired change was effected. This Act came into operation in January, 1867, and introduced very important changes. By its provisions the administration of primary education was committed to a single governing body, thus ensuring a greater measure of consistency in educational policy. A Board of Education, consisting of five members, under the designation of the Council of Education, was incorporated, and entrusted with the expenditure of all moneys appropriated by Parliament for primary education. It was, moreover, empowered to make regulations having the force of law, unless disallowed by express resolution of both Houses within one month of the date of their being submitted to Parliament. These great powers enabled the Council of Education to carry on the work of instruction without restrictions from any quarter except those imposed by law.

(*a*) *Classes of Schools.*[1] The Public Schools Act recognised four classes of schools. Authority was expressly conferred upon the Council to establish and maintain public schools[1] in localities where twenty-five children would regularly attend; and it was also provided that such schools should, whenever practicable, take precedence of all others supported by Parliamentary grants. Secondly, the Council was permitted to grant aid to denominational schools under certain restrictions as to the number of pupils, the conditions of the buildings, and the distance of public schools from those on behalf of

1. The term "public school" in New South Wales denotes a State school of primary grade.

which assistance was sought; they were required to follow the course of instruction prescribed for public schools, and to be open to inspection in the same manner; and the Council was empowered to withdraw certificates, and therefore aid, in case these conditions were infringed. Thirdly, provisional schools were to be established in places where a sufficient number of children for a public school could not be secured. Fourthly, a class of schools was instituted where the teacher divided his time between two small schools, with about ten or twelve pupils at each, called "half-time schools." The Public Schools Act provided that the instruction to be given in all these schools should consist of two parts, secular and religious, secular instruction, however, being held to include *general* religious teaching, as distinguished from polemical or dogmatic theology, and from the tenets of particular denominations. In the denominational schools the ordinary teachers were permitted to give the special religious teaching, while in the other schools that duty was handed over to the clergy or to other duly accredited religious teachers.

(*b*) *National Education Boards.* The local oversight of schools was provided for by the appointment of Boards of not less than three members appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Council of Education, but such Boards had nothing to do with the appointment or dismissal of teachers, although in the case of denominational schools they were consulted.

(*c Work of the Council of Education.* The benefits conferred upon the colony by the Council of Education were very great. Under its auspices school buildings of modern type as regards position, shape, size, and equipment were introduced, effective discipline was enforced, and systematic and progressive instruction arranged for. That Board also instituted the appointment and training of "pupil teachers," the training, examination and classification of teachers, and a liberal scale of remuneration, together with a comprehensive system of inspection.

The Council of Education took over 259 national schools, attended by 19,641 pupils, and 310 denominational schools, attended by 27,986 pupils, a total of 569 schools and 47,627 pupils.

(viii.) *The New South Wales Public Instruction Act of 1880.* The Public Schools Act continued in force until 1880; and though the system established by it was essentially one of transition, education made good progress during the thirteen years it was in force, especially after 1875, when the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution abolishing the provision that one-third of the cost of school buildings should be contributed locally, and directing that in future the entire cost of public schools should be defrayed by the public funds.

The principle of granting aid to denominational schools was, however, repugnant to the feelings of the majority of the people, who felt that the work of public instruction, being of such magnitude and involving so large an expenditure from the public funds, ought to become a department of the Government and be placed in the hands of a Minister directly responsible to Parliament. Accordingly, in 1880, an Act embodying these principles was introduced under the auspices of Sir Henry Parkes, and the "Public Instruction Act," now in operation, became law. The Council of Education handed over to the Minister of Public Instruction:—

Items.	Public.	Provisional.	Half-time.	Denominational.	Total.
Number of schools	705	313	97	105	1,220
Number of pupils	68,823	8,312	1,683	22,716	101,534

(*a*) *Essential Features of the Act of 1880.* The most important provisions of the Public Instruction Act are:—(1) Primary school education is placed under the sole

direction and control of a responsible Minister; (2) Teachers are made civil servants, and are paid exclusively from the public funds; (3) The system is wholly undenominational: all aid to denominational schools ceased on 31st December, 1882; (4) Attendance at school is made obligatory upon children between the ages of six and fourteen years, who reside within two miles of the school, for seventy days in each half-year, unless just cause of exemption can be shewn; (5) The teaching is strictly secular, but the words "secular instruction" are held to include general religious teaching as distinguished from dogmatic and polemical theology: the History of England and Australia must form part of the course of secular instruction; (6) High schools for boys and girls may be established, in which the instruction shall be of such a character as to complete the public school curriculum and prepare the pupils for the University; (7) Provision is made for constituting Public School Districts and for the appointment of School Boards with defined powers and duties; (8) School children are allowed to travel free by rail to the nearest public school; (9) Four hours during each day must be devoted to secular instruction, and one hour set apart for special religious instruction to be given in a separate class-room, if procurable, or in a separate part of the school-room, by a clergyman or religious teacher of any denomination to children of the same denomination whose parents have no objection to their receiving such religious instruction; if no religious teacher attends the full five hours must be devoted to the ordinary secular instruction.

(*b*) *The Question of School Fees.* Prior to the passing of the "Public Instruction Act of 1880" there were varying scales of school fees, and the fees were then retained by the teachers as part of their emoluments. The Act of 1880, however, readjusted teachers' salaries, and a fixed fee of threepence per week was charged, and the amount thus derived was paid into the Consolidated Revenue of the State. These payments amounted in late years to upwards of £80,000 per annum.

In 1906 Parliament passed an Act to abolish the payment of fees in primary and superior public schools of New South Wales, taking effect as from the 8th October of that year.

2. **Primary System of Victoria.**—This State, originally known as Port Phillip, was separated from the parent State of New South Wales in 1851. The system of dual control of educational matters, alluded to in the preceding section, was also in force in Victoria up to the year 1862, when the "Common Schools Act" dissolved the two Boards, and appointed instead a Board of Education consisting of five laymen. Up to this time, and until the passing of the Act of 1872, school fees, varying from 6d. to 2s. 6d. weekly, were charged, except in the case of those children whose parents were in necessitous circumstances. The Act of 1862 was not found to work with entire satisfaction, chiefly on account of its failure to provide anything like an equal distribution of educational facilities, and it was superseded by the Education Act of 1872, which came into operation on the 1st January, 1873. Under this Act the Board was abolished, and a Department of Education established, and placed under the control of a Minister of Public Instruction, while the principle of "free, secular, and compulsory education" was instituted. Boards of Advice were empowered to decide whether religious instruction should or should not be given out of school hours. Free instruction was given in the following subjects:—Reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, gymnastics (where practicable), and needlework for girls. Teachers were paid, in addition to fixed salaries, an amount as "results," not exceeding 50 per cent. of their fixed salaries, and determined by the percentage of marks gained at the annual examinations. Amending Acts were passed in October, 1876, and November, 1889, while the Education Act of 1890 consolidated the whole of the legislation dealing with the subject. Under the Education Act of 1901 the system of payment by "results" was abolished. The Act also provided for a permanent head of the department with the title of "Director." Provision was made for more regular attendance of scholars by enacting that the minimum attendance of children of the school age of six to thirteen years was to be raised

from forty school days per quarter to 75 per cent. of the whole number of half-days on which the school was open. Regulations were also made for the establishment of continuation and kindergarten schools. The minimum age of exemption from school attendance was fixed at twelve years. The subjects of free instruction in the primary schools were defined to be reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, drill, singing, drawing, elementary science, manual training, gymnastics, and swimming (where practicable), lessons in health and temperance (in case of children over nine years of age); sewing, cooking, and domestic economy for girls.

The Education Act of 1905, also known as the "Truancy Act," provides, amongst other things, that the limit of school age shall be fourteen instead of thirteen years. The minimum attendance was fixed at eight times in any week on which the school is open ten times, six times when the school is open eight times, and four times when the school is open six times, the word "times" meaning school half-days. Some important provisions in regard to the classification and emoluments of teachers were embodied in the Teachers Act of 1905, which came into force on the 1st January, 1906.

During the period of depression which followed the financial crisis of 1893 a number of schools were temporarily closed in Victoria, while, in the case of schools in closely-populated centres, a principle of amalgamation was put in force under which certain schools became what was termed "adjuncts" to others. A main school and its adjunct were both placed under the control of one principal, but the attendance at the adjunct was restricted to children in the first, second, and third classes. The number of schools at first made into adjuncts was sixty-nine, but the total was later on reduced until in 1907 there were only twenty institutions in this class.

Improvement was made in Victorian educational methods consequent on the Report of the Royal Commission of 1899. Inclusive of those already mentioned which were made the subject of legislative action, the training of teachers was placed on a more systematic basis, by discouraging the employment of pupil teachers and providing better for the proper tuition, in suitably-equipped institutions, of recruits to the ranks of the service. Allusion to the question of training teachers will be made in a later section. Further, the kindergarten teaching was systematised, and an expert was engaged to instruct infant teachers in approved methods, while special attention was given to the subjects of hand and eye work and natural science, in order to obtain the best practical results from the teaching.

Woodwork, cardboard modelling, and paperwork were introduced in 1900, and in 1907 there were twenty single centres for woodwork, each accommodating 200 boys, and one double centre, accommodating 400 boys. Additional teachers are also being trained, and Sloyd classes will be established in some of the smaller country towns. Attention is being given to the subjects of domestic economy and cooking. Twelve cooking centres are now open, giving instruction to 1556 girls. A College of Domestic Economy was opened in Melbourne in 1906, with an enrolment of eighty students. The Teachers' Registration Board, which is to some extent concerned with primary as well as with secondary education, will be referred to under the latter heading.

3. **Primary System of Queensland.**—From the date of its separation from New South Wales on the 10th December, 1859, up to the 30th September, 1860, primary education in Queensland was under the control of a Board of National Education, appointed by the Governor-in-Council. When the Board took office there were only two national schools in the colony. The Act of 1860 placed the control in the hands of what was termed the "Board of General Education," which consisted of five members, presided over by a Minister of the Crown. The duties of the Board were to superintend the formation and management of primary schools within the colony, and to administer the funds granted for this purpose by the Act. The scheme of operation followed in general principles the Irish National system. There were two classes of schools, vested and non-vested, the vested being unsectarian in character. The non-vested belonged to the

Anglican or Roman Catholic Churches, who provided the buildings and appointed the teachers, the board aiding by granting teachers' salaries and supplying school material. The Act of 1860 was superseded by the State Education Act of 1875, which came into operation in January, 1876, and is still in force. By the Act of 1876 the Board of Education was abolished, and its functions transferred to the Department of Public Instruction, under the official control of a Minister of the Crown, with the title of Secretary for Public Instruction. State aid to non-vested schools was withdrawn from the 31st December, 1880.

The Act in force provides for two classes of schools, State and provisional, State schools to include schools conducted in buildings erected on land vested in the Department of Public Instruction, and the provisional schools to be schools in which temporary provision is made for the primary instruction of children. As pointed out by the Director in a recent report, however, the term "provisional" is in many cases a misnomer, as the buildings are well and solidly built, and likely to fulfil all educational requirements in their districts for a considerable time. Half-time schools are provided in thinly-peopled areas, and itinerant teachers visit families in the remoter districts. One-fifth of the cost of State school buildings is provided by local voluntary subscriptions, the Department supplying the balance of the funds. The State defrays the whole cost of primary instruction, no school fees being charged. In the earlier years of the State's educational history fees were charged ranging from sixpence to one shilling and sixpence per week for each scholar, but these were abolished at the beginning of 1870. The curriculum prescribed by the Act embraced the following subjects:—Reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, history, elementary mechanics, object lessons, drill and gymnastics, vocal music and needlework for girls. Drawing was added to the curriculum in 1894, while, by an Amending Act passed in 1897, one or more subjects may be omitted in schools taught by one teacher only, and in other cases additional subjects may be added. Attendance at State schools is compulsory for at least sixty days in each half-year in the case of children not less than six nor more than twelve years of age, except under certain well-defined circumstances. No religious instruction is allowed to be given in school during school hours, but persons desirous of undertaking this work can do so after hours on obtaining the permission of the Minister of Education.

In 1907 evening continuation classes were established for the purpose of (*a*) enabling pupils to continue their education who had left school before they had been educated up to the standard required by the Education Act, (*b*) assisting persons to obtain instruction in special subjects relating to their employment, and (*c*) preparing students for the Technical Colleges.

4. **Primary System of South Australia.**—The history of public primary education in South Australia may be said to begin with the appointment of the Council of Education in 1875. Prior to that year the educational activity of the State was confined mainly to subsidising private institutions. In 1878 the powers of the Council were vested in the Minister of Education, and a permanent head was appointed. The Act of 1875 provided for the establishment of schools, and the training, classification, and remuneration of teachers, and made the attendance of children between the ages of seven and thirteen living within two miles of a school compulsory, until a certain standard of competency in reading, writing, and arithmetic was reached. Fees were charged, varying in amount at different periods from fourpence to sixpence a week, until in 1891 they were abolished, and education up to the compulsory standard was made free, children over thirteen years of age who remained at school after reaching this standard being charged a fee of one shilling per week. This charge was abolished in 1898; and any child above the age of five years may attend a State school without payment. In 1896, control of primary education was vested in a "Board of Inspectors." In 1902 an Inspector-General was appointed, his deputy being styled Assistant-Inspector-General. In 1906 the permanent head of the Department was styled Director of Education.

The primary schools are divided into two classes;—public schools, taught by certificated teachers, and provisional schools, taught by uncertificated teachers, who have undergone a special examination and served for a certain time in an efficient school so as to gain a knowledge of practical work. Generally speaking, public schools must have an average of twenty or more pupils, while the provisional schools contain less than that number. The public schools are divided into twelve classes, and the salaries paid to the principals in general depend on the class of the school. For male head teachers the salaries range from £110 to £450, and for females from £80 to £156. In schools of the first class the sexes are, as a rule, taught separately, except in the case of infant schools.

Provisional schools are of four classes, and the salaries of the teachers range from £66 to £108 per annum, and in a few cases to £120. The maximum salary for a female provisional teacher is £84.

Wherever practicable, schools are visited by inspectors at least twice each year, the first visit being devoted chiefly to observation of general organisation, while a detailed examination is conducted on the second occasion. Individual examination is applied only in the subjects of arithmetic and spelling, the inspector judging of the success of the teacher's methods in other subjects by a general inspection.

The course of instruction to be given in all schools is decided on by the Director, subject to Ministerial approval. A detailed scheme is drawn up for all classes so as to secure general uniformity of effort throughout the State. The curriculum is, however, not an unelastic one, as teachers are, with the approval of the inspectors, allowed to make variations to suit peculiar circumstances, and considerable freedom of choice is allowed in dealing with such subjects as elementary science, agriculture, horticulture, and various kinds of manual work. The subjects taught include reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, English, geography, English history, poetry, drawing, singing, nature study, moral lessons, manual work, drill, and needlework for girls. In a few schools the elements of Latin, German, Algebra and Euclid are taught. Books and school materials are supplied to the children at cost price, and are given free to those unable to pay for them. Compulsory attendance is in force, the scholars in or near corporate towns being required to attend for at least four-fifths of the time during which the school is open. Outside these limits, the compulsory attendance for children within three miles of a school is thirty-five days per quarter. The percentage of irregular attendance at present is small, and shews signs of still further decreasing.

5. **Primary System of Western Australia.**—The Elementary Education Act of 1871 provided for two distinct classes of schools in this State. In the first class were comprised the Government schools, established and supported by the Government, and controlled by a Central Board of Education. Teachers were appointed by a District Board, subject to the approval of the Central Board. The second class comprised the assisted schools. In the establishment of these the Government took no part, but paid a yearly grant towards their upkeep. Under the 1871 Act education was compulsory, but was not free except in cases of absolute poverty. The Elementary Education Act Amendment Act of 1893 abolished the Central Board, and transferred its powers to the Minister of Education, and inspectors and teachers were appointed by the Governor. Provision was made by this Act for the right of entry by clergymen or other religious teachers into all Government schools for the purpose of instructing pupils who desired it in the tenets of their particular faith. The period allowed for this special instruction was not to exceed half an hour each school day. "Secular" instruction was also given by the regular teachers, and was described as including general religious teaching as distinguished from dogmatic or polemical theology. Attendance at general religious instruction was not compulsory. These provisions are still in force, and work quite satisfactorily.

In 1895 the Assisted Schools Abolition Act was passed, a sum of £15,000 being paid to the schools formerly assisted by the Government.

By the Public Education Act of 1899 school fees were abolished in public elementary schools in the case of children between six and fourteen years of age. For scholars over

fourteen a fee may be charged, but so far the only fees charged have been sixpence per week for those over sixteen. Daily attendance is compulsory for children between six and fourteen, the compulsory radius being three miles for children over nine, and two miles for those under that age. Non-Government schools must be declared "efficient" by the Education Department if attendance at them is to be recognised as fulfilling the requirements of the law. The registers of these schools must be open to the inspection of compulsory officers of the Education Department. Under the Education Act Amendment Act of 1905 proprietors or teachers of private schools are required to send monthly and quarterly returns of attendance to the Education Department in order that the compulsory officers may ascertain that no children are evading the law. The curriculum of the primary schools includes English (under which heading are grouped reading, recitation, spelling, grammar, composition and literature), writing and drawing, arithmetic, Scripture, history, geography, nature study, lessons on the laws of health and temperance, manual work, drill and singing. In the upper classes of the larger schools the boys take a course of elementary geometry, algebra, and mensuration, and both boys and girls take a course of elementary science. Certain other subjects may be taken by permission of the Department in the sixth and seventh standards. As is the case in most of the other States, inspectors visit the schools at least twice in the course of each year, the first visit being for observation of methods of teaching and general organisation, and the second being devoted to estimation of the actual results of the teaching.

6. **Primary System of Tasmania.**—There are no official records conveniently available for tracing the history of public education in Tasmania prior to the year 1839, but it appears that some sort of denominational system was previously in existence. In January, 1839, there were twenty-two schools in operation with an enrolment of 758 scholars receiving Government aid to the amount of about £2000 per annum. Shortly afterwards a Board of Education nominated by the Government assumed control of State education, and considerably widened its scope. Only undenominational religious teaching was allowed in the schools, but clergymen had the right of giving instruction in their particular tenets at stated periods. About the year 1846 the system of subsidising denominational schools at the rate of a penny a day for each child present was introduced. This charge had the effect of withdrawing half the schools from the control of the Board and brought about the resignation of that body in 1848. The system was carried on under direct Government control until 1853, when another Board of Education was created, which continued till 1857, when two Boards—a Northern and Southern—were appointed. This arrangement lasted until 1863, when a reversion was made to a single Board with headquarters in Hobart. This administration continued till 1884, when the control again passed direct to the Chief Secretary until the coming into operation of the Education Act of 1885, which created an Education Department under the control of a Minister of the Crown, assisted by a professional head styled "Director of Education." This method of administration is still in existence. School fees were abolished in Tasmania in 1908. Prior to the Act of 1885 the cost of buildings was borne partly by the people, but the Act provides for meeting such expenditure entirely from the State funds. In the year 1904, owing to a feeling that public education in Tasmania was lagging behind that of the other States, the Government decided to have an investigation made by an independent expert. In consequence of the report received, the Ministry decided on a complete reorganisation. The chief improvements entered upon—and now at different stages of advancement—are as follows:—Classification of schools, regulation of salaries, provision for more up-to-date buildings, reorganisation of teaching and inspection methods, initiation of schools of instruction for teachers, and abolition of pupil-teacher system. Generally speaking, the educational system of Tasmania may be said to be organised very much on the lines of the leading systems of the mainland, although such subjects as manual work, nature study, and drawing have as yet been little developed. Attendance at school is compulsory for children between the ages of seven and thirteen. District Boards of Advice are in existence, but under the Local Government Act—to come into force at the end of 1907—their functions will be assumed by the new municipal councils.