

## THE EDUCATION BILL.

THE Education Bill introduced by the Government on March 24 has been so freely discussed in the public Press that everyone interested in educational work is familiar with its chief provisions. The fundamental idea is the creation of local bodies to supersede School Boards, managers of voluntary schools and technical instruction committees, and to be responsible for the organisation and maintenance of the various educational agencies—both primary and secondary—within their respective areas. The local education authority will be the County Council in counties and the Borough Council in county boroughs; it will work through committees appointed under schemes to be approved by the Board of Education, consisting of members appointed by the County and Borough Councils, with a minority of persons possessing expert knowledge of educational work. The committees will thus be similar to those under which the work of technical education has been carried on since 1889.

In the contributions by Dr. Oliver Lodge, Sir Joshua Fitch and Prof. Wertheimer, which are subjoined, several aspects of the measure are described. It will be evident from these articles, and from the views which have been expressed elsewhere by persons and organisations whose opinions merit attention, that the principle of local educational authorities meets with general approval. But it is apparently impossible for primary education to be considered in England without raising religious difficulties; and the controversy over this subject is of such an uncompromising nature that it threatens to delay or wreck the present measure as it has others.

The abandonment of the Bill would, in our opinion, be a disaster to education in England, for the measure represents an earnest attempt to put our educational system on a sound organic basis. The only way to avoid such a disappointment seems to be to divide the Bill into two parts—one concerned with secondary and the other with primary education—and let each part be dealt with as a separate measure. Secondary education includes technical education, and national progress depends more upon the coordination and extension of these higher stages than upon elementary instruction. What the country needs are masters and managers educated in the truest sense of the term, men with scientific training and sympathies, able to appreciate latent possibilities of industrial developments and anxious to encourage all work which aims at the advancement of knowledge. It is in students of this class that England is lamentably deficient as compared with Germany and the United States, and it is to such students that the country must look for material progress.

We ought not to have to wait for a settlement of the differences of theological parties before organising the agencies for higher education, which have fortunately been emancipated from these difficulties. The Bill as a whole is a comprehensive measure which could be made an Act of decided value to education, but as there seems little hope of removing the opposition to the part dealing with primary education, the sections dealing with secondary education, which are less contentious and are generally accepted, should be separated from it and passed first. The local authorities which would thus be created would then be able to gain experience, and perhaps in the course of time public opinion would be intolerant of the interference of sectarian parties with schemes for secular education. To permit such differences of opinion to delay the establishment of higher education on a sound basis would be a national misfortune.

EDITOR.

NO. 1694, VOL. 65]

## I.

The opposition threatened to the Education Bill just introduced by Mr. Balfour may or may not be weighty, but it is voluminous enough to demand some activity and energy on the part of those who realise 'the immense leeway in secondary education that has to be made up, and who welcome any real and public-spirited attempt to grapple with the difficulties of its effective organisation.

It is unlikely that the new Bill is free from faults, but it clearly represents a strenuous and conscientious effort to legislate in the right direction; to many it appears a statesmanlike attempt to grapple with the numerous difficulties and at the same time to leave as much opportunity as possible open for local experiment, for growing experience, and for the subsidence of needless hostilities; and in any case it should be welcomed by all who are interested in educational progress. For though they may not be able to approve every minute detail, yet the more they study it, the more they will realise the care and forethought which have been exercised in steering through the maze of conflicting interests and in endeavouring to lay down the wisest course.

The form of educational government which has most promoted rapid development and has shown itself to be extremely well qualified to adapt itself to new requirements is the kind of government which controls University colleges. The success and growth of these institutions has been the prominent educational feature of the last quarter century, and they are governed by a council consisting of local business and professional men, not specifically qualified—qualified highly in other directions,—who have sufficient public spirit to give some time and trouble to the work; this body, the council, is advised and assisted in all academic matters by the professorial staff in subordinate conclave, who form a body called the senate, which has no financial power, but has usually in practice, by reason of its special interest and knowledge, a very considerable guiding influence. The business man, when properly advised on technical matters, but only when so advised, is extremely expert as an organiser and conductor of affairs on common-sense lines; he is usually far more efficient in these respects than the academic officers themselves; and the combination of the two works admirably.

The system which has proved so effective may well be extended so as to take control of the schools also. Something like it is what the Government propose. The real education authority is to be the County or Borough Council, an assemblage elected for general purposes, and containing, it is to be hoped—certainly containing in all places where local self-government has been a credit and an inspiring example—the best and ablest of the citizens. It is vital that the best and most competent men shall consent to serve in this capacity, and everything which increases the interest and the dignity of the proceedings of such bodies is to be welcomed. But though each County and Borough Council is the ultimate authority, with power of purse, subject only to the central Board of Education which may be said to take the place of the Court of Governors of a University college as court of appeal and general supervisor, it is not to be the working administrator. This is to be a committee appointed by the Council, together with other persons who may be nominated by representative institutions, and may include experts in education of all kinds; and this administrative body will roughly correspond with the senate, and will have much power, but it must contrive to act so as to carry with it the conviction and the support of the local education authority itself.

The precise constitution of this committee is left undecided by the Bill—a feature which has excited hostile

comment—and the county authorities are asked each to draft and submit a scheme to the Board of Education, so as to allow as much local initiation as possible. This and many other provisions of the Bill may seem, to persons who come new to the subject, as a needless opening of the door to variety and difficulty; but the more we appreciate the different circumstances obtaining in different localities throughout the country, and the more we discuss the matter with representative men who have been connected with official educational matters in the past, the more does some such course seem desirable.

A series of private conferences was held in the University of Birmingham during November 1901, and was attended by a specially invited number of representative educationists, prominent members and officials of School Boards, managers of voluntary schools, and other men of experience and various views, representing opposite schools of thought; and at these conferences a general idea of the provisions which would be likely to secure practical agreement was arrived at. I propose in this article to summarise them and to indicate how far and in what way the Government Bill satisfies the conditions then laid down as most suitable.

First, there are three general conditions which any effective Bill should satisfy, and on which there was universal agreement:—

(A) That all education shall be included in the purview of the education authority so as to secure continuity of the educational system throughout the country.

(B) That the new authority should be sufficiently strong and independent of sectional interests to deal effectively and impartially with educational defects in its district, whoever is responsible for them.

(C) That it should be provided with prompt and efficient means of obtaining funds, both imperial and local, for carrying out its policy; that it should have proper borrowing powers; and likewise the power of compulsory purchase of sites.

To these may be added a fourth, which, though it touches upon controversial topics and when pressed into detail could easily excite difference of opinion, yet in its general form will probably be accepted by all fair-minded men:—

(D) That while insisting on a minimum of efficiency and on representation on the boards of management of all schools drawing assistance from national or local funds, the new authority should recognise the value of the voluntary schools to the nation, and do nothing to discourage the interest of religious bodies in the education of the people.

Next it seems to be quite widely and generally accepted that a unification of educational organisation is desirable, so as to break down the strict line of demarcation between primary and secondary, to raise the status of the primary teacher, and to open a career and the highest educational posts to competent men who enter the profession even at the lowest grade. It is also generally accepted that this general education authority should not be central, but be local; so as to spread the interest, to adapt itself to varying conditions, and to secure the many advantages of distributed local self-government. This was expressed in the first resolution:—

(1) That there should be one local Education Authority, which should control all the educational agencies receiving public support in the district—primary, secondary and technical—and should get into effective contact with institutions for higher education, such as non-local or endowed schools, University colleges and Universities.

But the difficulties begin as soon as it is attempted to lay down a constitution for the new authority. There are many who advocate that one uniform constitution should be laid down in the Act. Others hold that it would be better to let each locality consider what is best for itself, and to have at least the option of formulating a scheme, to be approved and sanctioned by the central

authority or Board of Education; but that no scheme should be drafted by that body except in cases where the locality did not choose to exert its power of choice. Although there would be a certain disadvantage in having different schemes simultaneously in force in different places, yet it is likely that each County Council would take more interest in and would take more pains to work a scheme that they themselves had had a hand in drawing up, rather than one which had been forced upon them, in which they had no voice, and might feel that they had no responsibility for its success or failure. Again, it appears difficult to say of any scheme that could be suggested that it is absolutely the best. It may be necessary to ascertain the best by actual experiment, and if different places adopt somewhat different schemes, the best of them may before long emerge and may hereafter be imitated elsewhere. At any rate, the majority of the conference was in favour of some local option in this matter, and adopted the following clauses:—

(2) That each County Council and each County Borough Council, either separately or in combination with other neighbouring councils and with representatives from adjacent boroughs, and in consultation with some recognised educational experts, shall formulate a scheme for the constitution of the Educational Authority in its district, and shall submit it to the Board of Education; subject to the proviso that no scheme is in general likely to be acceptable which does not provide:—

(a) That about two-thirds of the suggested Education Authority shall consist of members in some way or other elected by ratepayers of the district (though not necessarily elected for the specific purpose of education).

(b) That a reasonable proportion (say in general about one-sixth) of the suggested Education Authority shall consist of members nominated by specified educational institutions of weight and influence in or near the district.

(c) That the remainder shall be co-opted according to some scheme to be submitted.

(d) That place shall always be found, in one or more of the above classes, for women on each educational authority.

(e) That the members of the Educational Authority, whether co-opted or nominated or elected, shall retire in rotation, say one-third every three years or one-half every two years, but shall be eligible for re-election.

*Note.*—A minority held that it was undesirable to leave even this amount of experiment and variety to local option, but that a uniform constitution should be enforced in the act.

(3) If no scheme is formulated by a County Council, the Board of Education shall formulate one.

(4) Any scheme for the constitution of a local authority, however formulated, shall be published in the locality, and criticisms considered, and petitions heard against it, before confirmation and adoption.

The Government Bill differs from these clauses in the following particulars:—First and most important, it is not the authority itself which is to be thus constituted, but only the working committee; next, the Bill does not dictate to the County or Borough Council in what way it shall formulate a scheme which it shall submit for approval to the Board of Education; and, lastly, there are only two provisos laid down, which, however, embody the essence of the above provisos *a*, *b*, *c*, except that, instead of two-thirds, a majority only is insisted on, and this majority need only be elected by the ratepayers at second-hand, being appointed by, but not necessarily themselves being members of, the council. In practice, however, no doubt a large number of them would be actually elected-members of the council. In practice also it is to be hoped that proviso *d* above would always be enforced, for since half the children to be taught are girls, it is only a matter of common sense that place for women should be found on each education authority; and it might have been wise to attract support by definitely inserting this provision. But this and the business arrangements about retiring are left as part of the optional scheme to be drawn up by the various localities; indeed, the whole proposals of the



Government tend in the direction of leaving as much liberty and elasticity as possible, having faith in the county authorities to devise a suitable scheme without coercion from Parliament. This feature, it seems to me, should be welcomed except by persons who have no faith in popular government.

But there is one important item in the Government Bill which was not adopted by the above-mentioned conference, and which appears certain to excite the hostility, and which evidently has excited the hostility, of members of School Boards, though the reasons why they object to it do not lie on the surface. This is a matter on which much controversy turns, and it may be as well to explain it.

In the above proposals of the conference it was all along assumed that the committee appointed to work the educational scheme would be itself the education authority, and the following additional clauses with regard to its financial powers were drawn up:—

(5) That the Education Authority as constituted be an authority subject only to the Board of Education, that it have independent rating power, borrowing power and purchasing power, and be not regarded as a committee of the County Councils with proceedings subject to revision by those bodies.

*Note.*—Whatever objection may be felt to this independence of rating power for educational purposes, it is felt that if it were not granted the incipient harmony and agreement would be destroyed, for the School Boards would not willingly consent to resign an important portion of their powers to any but a strong and autonomous education authority.

(6) That the local authority shall administer and apportion all public educational funds; of which it is desirable that a larger proportion than at present should be derived from imperial revenue (since the local rate falls with undue severity on the poorer districts, and for other reasons), and that no limit be placed by Act of Parliament on the rating power for education of a local authority.

But here the Government Bill differs entirely; it constitutes the County Council itself the local authority and gives it full control of the purse (subject, however, to certain limits of rating power, which limits are too absurdly narrow as specified in the Bill, though a means of widening them is provided, for any education higher than primary); and the working education body is only a committee of this local authority, consisting of appointed, co-opted, and nominated members. The object of this contrivance is manifest, viz. to leave the ultimate financial control entirely in the hands of persons directly elected by the ratepayers, and to get rid of the anomaly of two independent rating powers. But there at once we touch upon the jealousy or rivalry which has existed between the County Councils and the School Boards, for the latter are not likely to be willing to give up their powers to a body elected for other purposes than education, the members of which are not necessarily even members of the education committee; nor are they likely to willingly resign their financial autonomy in favour of a mere committee without rating power. This has always been recognised as one of the most difficult points about the Bill, and it is not likely that any solution would meet all objections. On the whole, the Government solution seems to me ingenious and hopeful, but they must be prepared to face a genuine conflict of opinion on this point. Fortunately, the urgency of the conflict is mitigated by the optional provision which permits efficient School Boards to continue for a time; but the option does not rest with the School Board—it rests with the County Council; and this fact, though probably unavoidable, may lead to conflict. On the whole, it appears not unlikely that this provision for choice between adoption and non-adoption of the elementary education portion of the Bill may be abrogated; but strong arguments in favour of it are given below (see paragraphs following 14).

The next four propositions are little more than business arrangements, though it may be convenient to quote them. They are as follows:—

(7) That financial support be not granted to any institution until proper means be taken to secure its effective expenditure.

(8) That any existing powers whereby a locality aids an educational institution nominally outside its area shall be preserved.

(9) That it shall be the duty of each local authority to forthwith examine into the educational need of the district, to report to the Board of Education both on its present supply and from time to time on the further additional supply necessary, and, subject to control and approval by the Board of Education, to take steps for its provision.

(10) A right of appeal to the Board of Education on behalf of any aggrieved institution shall be conceded.

Of these it is satisfactory to find that No. 8 is included in the Bill, so that, for instance, a University college which manifestly serves an educational area without being actually located in that area, can as heretofore be assisted by the council controlling the area.

It is to be feared that No. 10 does not find a counterpart in the Bill. Right of appeal to the Board of Education as an arbiter is given in connection with primary education, but it is needed on behalf of any institution, though not of any individual, which feels itself aggrieved by some action of the local Education Authority.

Then there arises the question as to the proper size of an educational area. It would be desirable, if possible, that each complete area should contain an example of every grade of educational institution, from the primary school to the college and University. This is not feasible, but what is feasible is that for certain purposes some common action could be taken, or some amalgamation effected, by areas which are educationally too small. Moreover, there are many instances where the administrative county area will turn out very artificial for educational purposes, giving rise to much needless overlapping; and, although it would seem impracticable to mark out new areas, yet even that might be permitted if locally desired; anyway it would be quite feasible for county authorities to combine for educational purposes, and accordingly the conference adopted the following resolution:—

(11) That local Education Authorities of adjacent districts which for any reason have educational interests in common be empowered to combine, to discuss, and to appoint joint committees for all such purposes as may be common to their areas; and likewise, if they choose, to combine altogether or amalgamate for educational purposes, so as to constitute a large educational area administered by one authority; and that facilities for such combination be afforded.

*Note.*—Opinion was divided as to whether it was feasible to enforce combination among administrative counties for educational purposes, with the object of securing a large dignified and comprehensive educational area.

The essence of this desideratum is provided for in the Act in an ingenious manner, the arrangement of an education committee not itself a County Council facilitating the matter, because plainly county authorities could combine to work their districts by a single education committee nominated conjointly.

The educational standing of non-county Boroughs and urban districts has been a matter which has always given great trouble and excited considerable controversy.

A non-county borough with a large population, for which it has made considerable educational provision, and possessing a penny rating power for technical instruction, would resent being treated by a County Council on the same lines as the surrounding rural districts; and yet it seemed difficult to constitute so small a body with no great variety of schools in its area an actual Education

Authority. Accordingly the conference adopted the following resolutions:—

(12) That it be exceptionally permitted to some boroughs and urban districts in the neighbourhood of county boroughs to link themselves for educational purposes with the said county borough by mutual agreement instead of directly with their proper county.

(12a, supplementary to 12) Any Borough or District Council with general rating power shall be empowered to levy an additional rate for education in its own boundaries over and above that demanded by county authority from the entire area of which it forms a part; but this rate shall not be expended by the Borough or District Council until its recommendations have been submitted to, and approved by, the Education Authority in whose area it is situated.

The Government Bill solves the difficulty in a somewhat analogous but still more liberal manner—some think an over-liberal and unwise manner;—the Borough Council itself, when it represents more than a certain population, is constituted the local Education Authority, but it is given the option, not only of sharing, but actually of transferring, the responsibility, either the whole or a part, to a County Council, provided the latter is willing to take it, and at the same time its independent rating power for education higher than elementary is preserved.

It is to be hoped that the power of amalgamation between neighbouring counties, boroughs, and urban districts will be exercised; for this question of the size of an administrative area is really a very important one. Many eminent persons hold that an area the size of a Province would be in many ways better and more dignified than the present area of an administrative county: a return, as it has been called, to the heptarchy, the natural provinces of which were marked out by physical features, and have always retained a certain set of common interests. These ancient provinces are large enough to support highly dignified governing bodies, to which a great part of the local government still at present cumberously and expensively administered at Westminster could with propriety be transferred, thereby setting free the time of Parliament for Imperial purposes, and leaving local questions connected with locomotion, drainage and the like to be dealt with by the localities which most thoroughly understand them. It is just possible that amalgamation for educational purposes might form the beginning of this much-to-be-desired result.

Returning now to the business arrangements which must be made by an education committee, it is manifestly desirable that the authority for a large area shall not attempt actually to manage the schools in its area, but shall operate on them through Managers more immediately in contact with each school, such a board of managers being in most places already in existence, and being therefore conveniently continued, though with some modification.

The following resolutions were adopted by the conference, and similar provisions are included in the Bill:—

(13) That the Education Authority, though having control over all schools dependent on public funds, shall not constitute itself a board of management for any school; but shall provide that managers be appointed or continued for every school or group of schools within its area, according to some scheme approved by the Board of Education.

(15) In order to establish and maintain connection between the managing bodies and the local Education Authority, the latter shall nominate one or more persons to serve on each managing board or governing body concerned with any school or group of schools deriving financial benefit from rates or taxes.

(16) That in order to facilitate connection with and representation from the local authority, existing non-elected managing bodies be combined with one another for purposes of

administration, on lines similar to those in use under the Aid Grant Act of 1897.

But it is desirable that those specially appointed managers who represent the controlling body shall report to that body regularly. Otherwise the control might gradually cease to be effective.

I have omitted No. 14, which had to do with the future of the more efficient School Boards—those which had done good work and had gained the confidence of the community, and which it seemed undesirable to suppress. It was a very difficult point, and no satisfactory solution was arrived at. The resolution may be quoted, in order to emphasise the difficulty; and it was drawn in vague terms in order to cover, not only School Boards, but the boards of all other schools which are to be affected by the Act.

(14) That existing administrative educational bodies, wherever they have shown themselves efficient, be continued in their office and function as managing boards, and in such dependence on popular vote as already exists, and with their present attendance authority, but without rating power, and subject to the control, as hereafter defined, of the local Education Authority.

What the Bill proposes, however, is not this poor compromise; it proposes to leave it optional with each locality, at any rate for a time, to decide whether the existing School Board shall continue to take control as heretofore of primary education, or whether it shall be at once superseded by the new and comprehensive authority. Perpetuating the School Board system in places will have the effect of perpetuating there the undesirable dislocation between primary and secondary education; but, on the other hand, it will avoid introducing sudden disturbances; it will allow the present conditions, wherever efficient, to persist for a time; it will allow business to continue during alterations, and it will pave the way for a gradual change on to the new lines when time and experience are ripe. Hence it appears to me that this optional clause, permitting the transfer of primary control to be locally delayed for a time, is to be distinctly welcomed as affording an easy and elastic means for introducing the provisions of the Bill with the consent of each community, rather than forcing them to accept them prematurely. Ultimately it is to be hoped that but little conflict will arise between School Boards and County Councils on this matter, because no County Council would be foolish enough to overlook the advantage of nominating the prominent and efficient members of School Boards on to the new Education Authority, thereby continuing to reap the benefit of their wisdom and experience, just as they will continue the Board officials in practically their present office and function.

Those who advocate the abrogation of this optional clause, and the compulsory forcing on each County Council of full and immediate responsibility for primary as well as for secondary education, would do well to remember that voluntarism is the essence of local government in England; and that if a body is over-weighted, or prematurely loaded, people of judgment may decline to serve on it. Compulsory adoption of the Act would logically involve a measure to enforce service on a County Council.

The vexed question of how to improve and give rate aid to the schools provided by religious denominations, and of what special privileges can be conferred on such schools in return for certain pecuniary sacrifices made by the denominations interested in them, has excited, and will no doubt continue to excite, much controversy; but, as it seems to me, controversy of a belated kind, more noisy than effective, and largely maintained by those who have lived through the sectarian controversies of 1870. To the younger men these sectarian difficulties loom very small:



it is felt to be fair that if a religious denomination provide and keep a school in effective order, it should have the power of giving its specific instruction during certain limited hours, arranged so that scholars not belonging to that denomination may be withdrawn at the wish of their parents; and it is felt to be unfair that the secular instruction of the children in the district which such a school serves should suffer by reason of deficient funds owing to sectarian jealousies; it is felt, in fact, that the district can be properly called upon to support such a school in as thorough a manner as any other, provided always that the ratepayers' authority be extended (a) to a voice on the managing board in accordance with the above resolution No. 15, and (b) so that it shall have an effective voice in the appointment and dismissal of teachers. Accordingly the following resolution, together with the "powers and functions" numbered 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, below, was adopted, and practically represents what is, or may be under a "scheme," provided by the Bill; except that very unfortunately the word "dismissal" has escaped explicit mention. It may be held to be legally included in the word "appointment," but it is a vital matter to get security of tenure for all teachers, and not leave any of them at the mercy of individual action unchecked by the Education Authority.

(17) That a school whose buildings are the property of a religious organisation, by whom they are maintained to the satisfaction of the local Education Authority, shall be regarded as a privileged school in which special religious instruction is permitted at certain hours, in accordance with a time-table to be submitted by the managers to the Education Authority for its approval, and subject to the conscience clause of the Act of 1870.

*Note.*—A small minority considered that the upholders of these privileged schools, managed by non-elected bodies, though under the control of an elected educational authority, should be called upon to provide one-sixth of the income in addition.

It is desirable, however, and it may be feasible, to introduce a clause giving to other denominations, which are not providing a school, if they are in sufficient numbers and if there is no other school in the neighbourhood, to make application, not only for mere withdrawal of their children from the specifically denominational religious instruction provided, but, in addition, for the supply of general Biblical teaching for those children to attend in the same school at some other hour.

This question of the so-called voluntary schools—which is a misnomer, the proper title being denominational schools or privileged schools—is by no means an insignificant one, since more than two-thirds of the schools in the country are of this kind; and if they were not taken advantage of, it would not only be a blow to educational and humanitarian enthusiasm, but it would involve the ratepayers in enormous additional expense. At present these schools are suffering from extreme poverty, the voluntary contributions and the Imperial grant together being quite inadequate for their proper maintenance; and the buildings themselves are often inadequate, antiquated and unwholesome. With rate aid and proper control of teaching appointments, no longer leaving teachers subject to the caprice of an accidentally injudicious local clergyman, educational efficiency can be secured; and the denominational subscriptions will still be required, in some places even more than hitherto, in order to put the fabric into a satisfactory condition and to maintain it in substantial repair, as required by the Education Authority. If they do this, the denominations cannot be expected to do more, and they are entitled to give specific religious instruction at certain hours on the strength of this. But if they go further than this in their demands for rate aid, if they resent any element of popular control—resent, for instance, any interference

with their appointment and dismissal of teachers, or any influx of nominated members on to their managing board, that is to say, if they resent effective control of their rate-aided secular instruction—they will be taking an unwise course, and must not be surprised if the clauses in the Bill, which already give them everything to which they are reasonably entitled, are opposed so strongly as to be modified in a direction opposite to that which they desire. It is undoubtedly the interest of Churchmen, meaning by interest, not selfish interest, but public and denominational interest, to support the Bill; but the unwisdom of some few of the letters which have appeared in its support is extreme.

The last resolution adopted by the conference, having reference to the training of teachers, unfortunately has no corresponding clause in the Bill. It ran as follows:—

(18) That Education Authorities shall be empowered to enter into relations with Universities and University colleges and other institutions for higher education, in order to make provision for the proper training of teachers; and that after a certain date special sanction should have to be obtained for the employment of unregistered teachers.

But it is to be hoped that the omission has no real significance, that operations for the training of teachers will be in every way encouraged, and that it was only omitted because of the inadvisability of loading the Bill, or the duties of the new Education Authorities, with more than was absolutely necessary.

This represents all that I need now say on the general subject. The remainder of what the conference did was to draw up a specification of the "powers and functions" of the committee, stating in what way it should exercise control over the schools in its area, and what was meant by "control." It may possibly be useful to County Councils and other bodies engaged in formulating a scheme if these be here quoted; but it may be remarked that the first two are perhaps somewhat doubtfully wise in their present too unrestricted form.

#### *Specification of powers and functions.*

The functions and powers of the local authority shall be:—

(1) To keep a register of the efficient schools in the area, and to transfer schools and endowments from places where they are not wanted to places where they are.

(2) To make orders for the use of endowments or other grants, for establishing scholarships from schools to other schools or to colleges and Universities. and

(3) To inspect all schools in its area as to buildings sanitation, and publicly aided schools as to educational efficiency, and to make regulations in accordance with the reports of its inspectors.

(4) To withhold financial aid from any school and to close any publicly aided school which fails to comply with its regulations or which is educationally inefficient.

(5) To frame a scheme to be submitted for approval to the Board of Education for the remodelling, when necessary, of the constitutions of existing publicly aided schools, and for providing new schools.

(6) To receive and consider the curriculum of each publicly aided school, as submitted by the board of managers; to amend and refer back any part of such scheme; and ultimately to approve the curriculum adopted, having regard to the educational needs of the district.

(7) To receive and consider recommendations of the managing board concerning the appointment and dismissal of teachers in the schools under its management, and to be the final court of appeal in such matters.

(8) "Control" shall mean the exercise of any of these powers.

OLIVER LODGE.

## II.

The Bill recently introduced by Mr. Balfour is a complex measure, carrying with it some consequences which are not apparent at first sight. Many of its clauses—notably that which makes the adoption of

some of its provisions voluntary on the part of the County Councils—will doubtless be subject to much criticism and to many amendments in detail before it passes into law. Meanwhile it may be useful to review the chief features of the Bill, as they affect (1) technical, secondary and higher education, and (2) the public elementary schools.

Part II. of the Bill follows in the main the line indicated in the former Bill of 1896, which was withdrawn by the Government of that year. It gives to each council of a county and of a county borough, and to the council of any other borough with a population of more than ten thousand, the name of the "local education authority," and empowers it to supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary. The Technical Instruction Acts of 1889 and 1891 are repealed, and with them disappears the definition of "technical instruction," which has practically restricted the application of funds under those Acts and under the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act to technical and scientific instruction. The local education authority of the future is therefore set free to allot its revenues to advanced instruction in any form which the circumstances of the district need, whether scientific, commercial, literary, technical or manual, or whether, as is more probable, the secondary schools include in their programmes all of these forms of instruction in varying proportions. This is a clear gain; the Bill may, it is to be hoped, encourage the formation of a sounder public opinion respecting the true scope and purpose of a liberal education, as distinguished from the specific preparation of the student for any one form of practical or industrial pursuit. Since in another part of the Bill (clause 18) evening scholars and scholars above the age of fifteen are excluded from the elementary schools, and presumably from a share in the ordinary Parliamentary grant, it may be inferred that, in addition to the existing grammar and endowed schools, and technical and secondary schools generally, all the higher-grade and continuation schools, and evening schools now controlled by the School Boards, will come into the domain of "higher education" and will receive aid only under the provisions of Part II. of the new Bill. Beside these, it is to be assumed that the local education authority will have under its care the training colleges for teachers, the pupil-teachers' central classes, and the management of local scholarships and of such endowment funds as are applicable to education in their respective districts.

The resources available for advanced education under all these forms will be drawn from the fees of the scholars, from the whole residue of the fund generally known as "whisky money" and provided by the Local Taxation Act, and from a rate which is not to exceed twopence in the pound in counties and county boroughs, or a penny in the pound in non-county boroughs. It is manifest that these resources will not suffice to fulfil all the purposes just enumerated, and will leave little chance for the establishment of such new schools or colleges as may be needed, or for any adequate organisation of secondary instruction in the whole country on a generous scale. Moreover, it is to be observed that the new educational authorities will be only "committees" of the County Councils. They will have no power to raise rates or to give effect to their own recommendations, but will act in all respects in subjection to the veto of larger bodies, which are chiefly concerned with county business, with the water supply and with gas, tramways and sewage, and will be strongly tempted to keep down the rates and to give to the interests of education a subordinate place. It may fairly be concluded that the measure of the Government, if passed in its present form, will have the effect of repressing rather than encouraging educational enterprise, the expansion of existing institutions, the establishment of new ones, or the trial of new experiments.

This serious defect in the constitution of the local

educational authority becomes more evident when we consider its probable influence on elementary education. At present the School Boards, which are the popularly elected administrators of the public funds available for elementary education in a given district, are under no restriction as to the local contributions to be levied in the form of rates, and are responsible only to two superior authorities—the ratepayers who elect them and the central Board of Education at Whitehall. Under the proposed measure, the managers of schools will be placed in relation to three authorities—the Board of Education, the County Council and the nominated Committee. It is difficult to see what can be gained in administrative efficiency or in unity of educational purpose by this arrangement. The measure will certainly check the ambition of "educationists" who are busy in discovering new methods and increasing the usefulness of the schools, and in effect it will encourage local authorities to prefer economy to educational improvement. As to the Board of Education—hitherto known as the Education Department—its policy of late has been to abdicate many of the most important functions which it once discharged to the great advantage of the public. Until lately it set up standards of excellence, and sought by graduating its grants to secure that these standards were attained. It has in recent years deemed it better to relieve itself of all attempt to discriminate between good, bad and indifferent schools, and has declined to examine the scholars and has awarded practically the same grant to all schools alike. It now proposes to leave to school managers the responsibility of framing such schemes of instruction as will satisfy the local public, and of seeing that these schemes are carried into effect. Thus between a central Department which is ceasing to exercise more than nominal control and a County Council which may chance to consist of persons hostile or at least indifferent to the intellectual progress of the people, or are else absorbed in county business of another kind, our principal safeguards for such progress, which have hitherto been found in School Boards elected *ad hoc*, and presumably caring most of all about the credit of their own town and the goodness of their schools, will be seriously weakened. It is impossible to look forward without grave misgivings to the future of popular elementary education in England under the new conditions contemplated in the Bill.

But, after all, the true significance and the obvious *motif* of the measure are to be sought elsewhere. Its best friends do not claim that elementary education under the new conditions will become sounder, larger in its scope, more scientific in its methods, or nobler and loftier in its aims. They advocate it chiefly because it will bring relief to the supporters of voluntary schools, especially to those of the Established Church. It is well to recall the actual facts of the present situation. About half of the children under instruction in England and Wales are taught in Church schools, owing to the fact that in the rural districts there is generally but one school in the parish and that the parents have no opportunity for exercising a choice. In towns, however, where such an opportunity exists, the Board Schools are generally fuller and more popular. Out of a total expenditure of nearly thirteen millions of pounds upon elementary education, the Church of England contributed last year about six hundred thousand pounds, in the form of subscriptions, congregational collections, and grants from local endowed charities. For this sum the representatives of the Established Church secured the sole management of schools attended by more than two millions of scholars, and the full power to give distinctive theological teaching and to administer the schools in the interests of the Church. To a plain man this arrangement appears to be an excellent bargain, from the point of view of those who regard those interests as supremely important. But it is always described in diocesan conferences,



episcopal charges and religious newspapers as a gross injustice and an "intolerable strain" upon the benevolence of Church people. Accordingly, the Government has been urged by the advocates of the denominational principle to make two concessions by way of relief: (1) to increase the public grant so as to make all voluntary subscriptions unnecessary, and yet to leave the existing managers free to preserve the distinctive denominational character of their schools, and (2) to repeal that clause (the fourteenth) in the Education Act of 1870 which forbids the teaching of creeds and formularies in the Board Schools, and so to permit the ministers of religion to give separate instruction in those schools to the children of their respective flocks. Both of these proposals were accepted by the Government and embodied in the abortive proposal of 1896. The second, however, does not appear in the new Bill. The Cowper Temple clause is not repealed, but will still remain applicable, not only to all existing Board Schools, but presumably to all new elementary schools to be provided by the proposed education authority. But to the former of the two demands, the Bill makes a liberal response. Denominational schools are to be financed and supported in future at the expense of the rates, on the easy condition that the managers provide and maintain in repair the school building—not, it should be observed, the furniture and equipment—and shall continue to maintain it as a Church school, subject only to the proviso that a number of members of their body, not exceeding one-third, shall be nominated by the local authority.

It will be seen from a careful study of the Bill that its dominant purpose, so far as regards elementary education, is to encourage the multiplication of denominational schools, to remove the "intolerable strain" of maintaining them from the shoulders of the churches to those of the ratepayers, to strengthen the denominational system and to give it a renewed chance of permanence. It may be that this great change in the national policy will commend itself to the approval of the English Parliament and people, but its meaning should not be misunderstood. It was the prayer of the Greek soldier, "Let me die in the light," and if, after all our experience and the efforts of statesmen to make our system of public instruction more national and less sectarian, we are really destined to see that system impaired if not destroyed, we ought at least to have our eyes open, and to see clearly what is the nature of the present reactionary movement and whither it tends.

J. G. FITCH.

### III.

The two main causes for the relative poorness of British technical education as compared with that given in Germany and the United States are, (a) the fact that comparatively few British manufacturers have as yet learned the need for the efficient technical training of those whom they employ, and (b) the chaotic condition of the secondary, and part of the elementary, education of this country.

The Government Bill is a step towards the rectification of the latter defect, for not only does it make possible some organisation and improvement of secondary education, but it also tends to secure greater efficiency for the denominational elementary schools, many of which are at present in a starved condition.

Most of those connected with technical education will be glad to see that the Government has chosen as its educational authority a body on which, while the representative element will rightly predominate, there will be a minority of educational experts. Evening classes will come under the control of this new authority, and it will be possible to grade them properly and to secure that the bulk of the money spent upon them is not frittered away in simply giving many thousands a mere smattering of

knowledge. At present this is the case to a considerable extent, and one reason for it is the lack of proper coordination between evening classes in Board Schools and higher institutions; such coordination would encourage a much greater number of the Board-School pupils to continue their studies to a stage when these studies might prove of real benefit, not only to the pupils, but also to the nation.

The Bill has two serious defects, both of which, however, can be easily remedied. In the first place there is the optional clause, which leaves it to the various county and borough councils to decide whether or not they will make themselves responsible for the whole of the education in their districts. If this stands it is certain to perpetuate old difficulties and to give rise to a whole series of new ones; it is to be hoped, therefore, that the Government will stiffen its back and leave no option in regard to this important matter.

Secondly, there is no clause in the Bill which appears to safeguard the interests of technical education by ensuring that the residue under the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890, shall continue, as heretofore, to be devoted to the purposes of technical education. It is of great importance that this should be specifically enacted, as otherwise there will be a danger that, in view of the increased demands upon the ratepayers for improved elementary and secondary education, the local authorities may curtail the sums they now expend on technical education, though those sums are still inadequate when compared with the sums spent by our leading industrial competitors.

Finally, it would be well to include in the Bill some provision, not only for the coordination of work within the district of each local authority, but also for the coordination by means of the central educational authority of the work undertaken by the local authorities themselves. This is particularly necessary in the matter of technical education, for, if we are to have technical colleges which will be comparable in efficiency with those of the United States of America, we must gather large numbers of students into a relatively limited number of centres, and provide in each centre the best possible equipment and a teaching staff on a scale much more generous than in any example at present to be found in Great Britain. Elementary technical education ought, of course, to be given as far as possible in all parts of the country, but the attempt of small towns to give the highest technical education to few students should be discouraged. These students should be drafted into centres, and the determination as to where these centres should be placed should be left in the hands of the central educational authority. Moreover, higher technical education being a matter of more than local importance should be subsidised, not only, or mainly, by local authorities, but very largely by the State itself. One may hope for such increased State aid at present, but it seems scarcely justifiable to expect it; our statesmen have yet to learn that expenditure on an army and a navy to keep the "open door" for our commerce will not suffice to enable us to meet foreign competition, unless we expend time and money on the training of our industrial and commercial leaders in the same liberal and enlightened manner as is the case in the foremost foreign countries.

J. WERTHEIMER.

### THE REGINA MARGHERITA OBSERVATORY.

THE investigation of the physiological phenomena which present themselves when man ascends to high altitudes is as fascinating as the results are, or promise to be, important. The fascination and the importance are connected with the complexity of the problems which have to be dealt with. The effect on respiration due to the diminished oxygen of the rarefied