

**REPORT OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE, 1908;
PRESENTED TO THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

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Report of Education Committee, 1908; presented to the Legislative Council by Various

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REPORT

OF

EDUCATION COMMITTEE,

1908.

Presented to the Legislative Council,
1908.

SALISBURY :

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1908.

[A 5—1908.]



MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE.

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HERBERT THOMAS LONGDEN, Esq., M.L.C., Gwelo.
FRANCIS RUDOLPH MYBURGH, Esq., M.L.C., Umtali.
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WILLIAM GOVAN BENNIE, Esq., B.A., Deputy Inspector of Schools,
Cape Colony.

J. ROBERTSON,
Secretary.

REPORT

Of the Committee appointed by His Honour the Administrator to enquire into and report upon the laws and system under which education is at present provided, and to make such recommendations as, in the opinion of the Committee, will tend to greater efficiency.

PART I.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows :—

1. The terms of reference, as above mentioned, were of the widest nature, and indicated that the Committee were to have a free scope in determining what matters should be considered, and on what lines their investigations should be conducted. Scope of enquiry.

We might have felt some difficulty in arriving at a decision upon the plan of our enquiry had it not been for the fact that certain grounds of dissatisfaction with the present system of education had been disclosed in certain resolutions (Appendix I.), submitted to His Honour the Resident Commissioner in 1906, by a committee appointed at a public meeting in Salisbury. These formed the subject of a debate in the Legislative Council in May, 1907, and indirectly led to the formation of the present Committee. Salisbury resolutions.

We were also placed in possession of a Memorial (Appendix II.) sent to the Visiting Directors of the British South Africa Company by some 380 residents of Bulawayo, expressing dissatisfaction with the system of, and facilities for, education in that town. The Directors had promised that this Memorial should be considered by the Committee, which was then in contemplation. Bulawayo Memorial.

With these documents before us, we were able to forecast the directions in which our enquiry was likely to extend, and we decided to classify our investigations and discussions under the following heads, leaving any further branches of the subject to be considered as they came forward in the course of the evidence :— Subjects of enquiry.

- (1) The system of Government grants, and the operation of the existing Education Ordinance.
- (2) The question of establishing Government undenominational schools at main centres.
- (3) The means for providing education for children in outlying centres and districts.
- (4) The question of compulsory education.
- (5) The co-education of boys and girls.
- (6) The system of inspection.

- (7) The curriculum of primary schools.
- (8) Secondary education.
- (9) Technical education.

The evidence which we have taken has not in any material point traversed beyond the ground covered by the above headings.

Native educa-
tion.

It will be observed that the subject of native education was not included in the scheme of the enquiry. We were not in possession of any *a priori* evidence shewing that there was dissatisfaction with the provisions made by the Ordinance for native education, and we decided to abstain from consideration of the subject unless the evidence shewed that decided views were held by a considerable section of the witnesses. The result justified this course: only one witness (Rev. Mr. Etheridge) dealt to any extent with the education of natives, and, although the members of the Committee visited the institution of which this gentleman is the head—viz, the native mission schools at Penbalonga—they were unable to see enough of the routine to entitle them to express any opinions or to make any recommendations.

Questions sent
to witnesses.

Every witness who volunteered or was invited to give evidence before the Committee was furnished with a series of questions (Appendix III.), and, besides those who appeared personally, many answered these questions in writing, while a few gave both written and oral evidence.

Localities
visited by Com-
mittee.

The Committee sat for the purpose of receiving evidence at Salisbury, Umtali, Gwelo and Bulawayo, and fifty witnesses in all were examined. A list of the witnesses, with their professions, is appended to this report (Appendix IV.), and it will be seen that they were representative of a great variety of interests. Of the 19 ministers of various denominations who tendered evidence, seven were of the Church of England, three each of the Roman Catholic, Wesleyan Methodist and Dutch Reformed Churches, and one each of the Hebrew, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches.

Representative
nature of evi-
dence.

Amongst those who sent in written statements without giving oral evidence (Appendix V.) there was one clergyman of each of the following denominations:—Church of England, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and Methodist Episcopal.

We are satisfied that no shade of thought or interest in the country was left unrepresented, and while the conflict of opinions expressed was in some measure embarrassing we are gratified at the hearty co-operation which we have met with at the hands of the public—pointing to a very widespread and real interest in the important subject we were called upon to investigate.

Historical
sketch.

2. Before dealing with existing problems it will be advantageous to trace briefly the history of the educational movement in Rhodesia. For this brief historical sketch we are indebted to an officially-published report by Mr. H. E. D. Hammond, the first Superintending Inspector of Schools, and to some notes which Mr. Geo. Duthie, the present Director of Education, specially prepared for this Committee. We have also to thank the latter for the numerous and valuable statistical schedules which are to be found in the Appendix (Appendices VI. to XIV.).

Early schools
in Rhodesia.
1895.

The first school for European children was opened in Bulawayo, early in 1895, with an attendance of 30 pupils above six years of age. The instruction in this school was undenominational, though it is not quite clear by whom it was founded. In the same year a school—termed the "Convent School"—was opened on similar lines by the Jesuit priests and the Dominican sisters. Grants were also made to the Church of England for school purposes at Salisbury, Bulawayo and Gwelo. Shortly afterwards the Government made an agreement with the Dutch Reformed Church to pay

annually one-third of the salaries of their ministers at Bulawayo, Melsetter and Enkeldoorn, in return for an undertaking that they would conduct schools for the Dutch children in those districts. It will be seen that the first beginnings of education in the territory were largely due to the initiative of different religious bodies, though the teaching was always undenominational. In September, 1896, there were two schools for European children in Salisbury, one conducted by the Dominican sisters, the other by the representatives of the English Church. The same year saw the opening of two schools by the Dutch Reformed Church—one at Bulawayo, the other in the central Melsetter district—while the Jesuit fathers started a school for boys at Bulawayo. At the close of the year there were four European schools at Bulawayo, with 149 pupils. In 1897 a small school for Europeans was opened at Umtali. In the following year the Salisbury Town Council erected a school building for boys and girls, and entered into an agreement with Government for its conduct, whereupon the English Church school was closed, the Bishop being of opinion that one large school would be more efficient than two small ones. The sisters of the Dominican order opened a large school for girls and small boys, with boarding accommodation for the former. In the same year a school was opened at Bulawayo under the auspices of the Church of England (St. John's), and two private schools were at this time in existence. In 1898 the number of children attending school at Bulawayo was 310, and the education at all the schools, except that of the Dutch Reformed Church, was undenominational.

In 1899 the first Education Ordinance (Appendix XV.) was passed. Its main provisions were the creation of an Education Department and of an Inspectorate, and the institution of a system of Government aid to qualified schools which conformed to the regulations. Schools were classified as Undenominational Public Schools and Voluntary Public Schools, and the grants-in-aid were on the pound-for-pound principle.

The following eight schools were at this time in receipt of Government aid :—

At Salisbury :

- (1) The Convent School (Dominican sisters).
- (2) The Public School (public board).

At Bulawayo :

- (3) St. George's School (Jesuit fathers).
- (4) The Convent School (Dominican sisters).
- (5) St. John's School (Church of England).
- (6) Dutch Reformed Church School.

At Umtali :

- (7) American Mission School.

At Enkeldoorn :

- (8) Dutch Reformed Church School.

The Board of the Salisbury Public School was composed of five members, of whom two were nominated by Government, two by the Town Council (which guaranteed half the expenditure), and one elected by the parents, and this was the only aided school in the territory which was not carried on under the supervision of a religious body. Four centres were now fairly well equipped with facilities for primary education, but the outside communities were still unprovided for, and it became evident that, to meet their requirements, modifications would have to be made in the existing legislation.

The second Education Ordinance (Appendix XVI.) was passed in 1903. Under it the Government aid, which by the 1899 Statute could only be accorded to schools with a minimum of 25 pupils, was allowed to be accorded to smaller schools.

schools at the discretion of the Administrator. Provision was also made for aiding boarding houses and necessitous boarders (Order B). An important clause was introduced empowering the Administrator to establish schools in places where a Board of Managers could not be found, and to maintain them wholly from public funds, or to make special arrangements in cases where the Boards of Managers were unable to maintain the schools on the pound-for-pound principle (Order E).

The elastic nature of these provisions undoubtedly gave a great impetus to education, but, as will presently be pointed out (Part II, 4), led to certain difficulties in the administration of the Ordinance, for which it will be the aim of the Committee to suggest a solution.

1904.

Additional schools.

By 1904 we find the following additional schools established :—(9) Gwelo Public School, which started with about 17 pupils and has remained more or less at the same level; (10) Victoria Public School, which started with 14 pupils, gradually dwindled down to 6, and has now again reached 12 pupils; (11) Selukwe Public School, which started with 12 pupils and has now 21; (12) Penhalonga School with 7 pupils to start with, coming down to 5 and now standing at 17 pupils; and two boarding schools, (13) one at Melsetter with 11 pupils, suddenly rising to 34, and now numbering 18, and (14) one at Plumtree commencing in 1902 with 6 pupils and now numbering 59. There were thus 14 schools for Europeans at the beginning of 1904.

In the case of the Salisbury School the dual control by the Government and Municipality led to a deadlock, and, at the latter's request, the Government undertook the management of the school and the provision of all the necessary expenditure.

The Gwelo School was originated through the efforts of a Nonconformist clergyman, but in 1903 the whole control and financial responsibility passed to the Government.

Victoria School was instituted by the Church of England with the help of the Government; but by 1905 the School Committee found that they could not raise funds for further expenditure and the whole cost of maintenance fell on the Government.

The Penhalonga School has been carried on by a representative Board which is still in existence.

A word may be said as to the schools at Melsetter and Plumtree. The Melsetter district is far from the railway and is occupied by a number of scattered families, chiefly Dutch-speaking. Some years back it was devastated by cattle disease, and, as the wealth of the community was comprised mainly in stock, the people were reduced to straitened circumstances, and Government was compelled to make very liberal provision for the education of their children. It was arranged that the cost per child for board, education and books should be fixed at £2 10s. a term, all remaining expense being undertaken by the Education Department, and this arrangement is still maintained.

At Plumtree the boarding school was instituted mainly for the children of railway employes, in respect of whom one-third of the fees, amounting to £3 10s. per term only, is borne by the parents, the remaining two-thirds being shared by the Railway Company and the Government.

1907.

Additional schools.

By the beginning of 1907, four more had been added to the list of Government-aided schools, viz.: (15) Que Que School with 16 pupils, under the charge of the Congregationalist minister; (16) Lobenvale School, near Bulawayo, with 14 children, under the Dutch Reformed Church; (17) Eben-haizer School, near Gwelo, also under the Dutch Reformed Church,

which started with 15 pupils and now has 21; (18) Umtali High School, under a publicly-elected board, with 28 pupils.

Three minor schools, in different parts of the country, bring the total of Government-aided schools to 21; and the cost of maintenance of six of these, less what is derived from school fees, is borne by Government (Salisbury High School, Gwelo Public School, Victoria School, Melssetter Boarding School, Giant Mine School, Ayrshire Mine School). Of the others, five are controlled by representative Boards (Umtali High School, and the Penhalonga, Enkeldoorn, Plumtree and Que Que Schools) and ten are managed by clergy or church committees.

3. The present position of education in Rhodesia may be accurately gauged from the tables Nos. VI.—XIII. in the Appendix. Schedule VI. gives details of the distribution of the children in the various urban and rural areas. These figures are derived from the returns of the Census taken on the 29th September, 1907, and the schedule shows the number of European children of the ages of 5 and 6, and also of those between the ages of 7 and 14, receiving education.

The Director of Education makes the following comments on these schedules:—

“Combining the figures for both periods it would appear that between the ages of 5 and 14 inclusive, which is usually taken to be school age, 622 are in aided schools, 205 in private schools, 435 are educated at home, and 392 are not being educated, or in percentages, 37.6 per cent. are in aided schools, 12.4 per cent. are in private schools, 26.3 per cent. are educated at home, and 23.7 per cent. are uneducated. The first observation that has to be made is that the figure under aided schools, viz., 622, does not agree with the figure of the schedule made up from the school returns (Schedule 2). The number between 5 and 14 in the schools return for last term is 715. This last figure is the correct one, and the discrepancy is explained by the fact that since September 29th when the census was taken, a number of scholars have been added to the attendance at Government-aided schools. This would make the percentage of children in Government-aided schools between 5 and 14 to be 43 per cent. It would appear also that only 23.7 per cent. are not being educated. The question arises as to the class of education children are receiving who are being educated at home. I do not think that it can be assumed that all the 435 said to be educated at home are receiving an education equal to what they would receive in a school. But I think it can be fairly assumed that half of them are being satisfactorily trained. This would mean that 36.8 per cent. of the children of school age have to be provided for. But again in the towns there are 138 not being educated and 127 being educated at home, and as they have educational facilities provided for them they need not be considered further at present. Turning now to the rural areas, there are 254 not being educated, and taking half of these being educated at home, viz., 154, the total to be considered is 408 children, or practically 25 per cent. of the children of school age.

“It would probably be well to take a rapid glance at each of the rural districts in order to see which are requiring immediate consideration and to indicate what is now being done.

“In the Salisbury district it may be taken for granted that the children mentioned as receiving education at home are entered