

SOME EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

OF A

RURAL ENVIRONMENT

by

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## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION

The absolute isolation of the rural areas of New Zealand has undoubtedly disappeared during the last few decades, due, in the main, to modern trends and scientific inventions, and partly to the changing outlook of the people whose vocations cause them to settle in country or rural districts. Although there may have been a drift to the cities and large towns in recent times, this has not brought about greater differences between rural and urban environment. Motor-cars, radio, the cinema, consolidated schools, University extension, school dental and medical services, women's organizations of various kinds, farmers' unions, all have tended to bring closer intercourse between rural and urban areas.

However, it must not be thought that there are no differences, that city dwellers and country folk are of the same mind concerning everyday problems, that the environment of the city child and the country child is alike. These differences are still very great, and, from an educational point of view, are very worthwhile studying, to endeavour to find out the differences, the advantages and disadvantages of the rural environment of country children today.

In the search for data, a typical mixed farming area will be taken, and, although rather small on which to formulate accurate conclusions, the size of the district, the varied

occupations of the people, and heterogeneous types of children will enable fairly broad conclusions to be reached.

The Albury district, including Mt. Nessing, Chamberlain, Tengawai and Cricklewood, in South Canterbury is a mixed farming area some thirty miles from Timaru, on the railway from Timaru to Fairlie. The township itself is a typical rural one, with a store, postoffice, hotel, school and fifteen families; it is merely the focal point of the surrounding farming districts, and, as would be expected, contains school-teachers, postmaster, minister, stationmaster, storekeeper, hotelkeeper, carrier, stock agent, rabbiters and seasonal farm labourers.

The district is a mixed farming area, with sheep farming predominating on the rolling hilly country, wheat, small seeds, and cows being the chief sidelines. The holdings are, for the most part, not very large, averaging round about 300 acres. The farmers are, therefore, quite comfortably off, and can afford, within reason, to give their children every educational advantage offered to them.

It will be noted, therefore, that, for the purpose of this thesis, there will be two groups of children mentioned and discussed which I shall call township children and district children, as in certain cases different implications will arise from these slightly different environments.

Although many aspects of education overlap, I shall divide my researches into several sections and discuss each section in turn. But, in dealing with the reaction e.g. health, it will be necessary to touch on the consolidation problems, travelling by bus to school, lunches at school and the like, although I shall try not to duplicate problems and conclusions.

SECTION II

HOME CIRCUMSTANCES

Arising out of the introduction is one of the most fundamental of school and educational problems, the question of home circumstances. Here one of the first facts noted is the somewhat different circumstances between township and district. The township parents are financially poorer, but in their homes have better furniture, more conveniences, more leisure, which is not always spent to the best advantage, very keen on enabling their children to get a good education with the end in view of good positions in the future. Two large families, in particular, are small farmers as well as labourers in order to supplement the family income purely to help their children to become well-educated. Of course, practically all the township parents have a cow each, and in three cases raise their own pigs, and have as good gardens as the light, shingle soil will allow.

The district homes are varied but in most cases are not so well furnished, less conveniences, and the parents, while contending that a good education is necessary, are more interested in their farms and crops than in planning ahead for the vocations of their children.

The children in all cases are well nourished, well clothed, and do not seem to want for anything. Anything

needed at school is readily provided and all children are clean, neat and tidy, and better dressed than many school children I have seen in the cities.

Recently a child of 7; L.H. came to the district from Christchurch and was so poorly dressed in comparison that my infant mistress helped to make him some clothes. He is now quite clean and tidy.

I consider that, of recent years, there have been big changes in the attitude of parents in rural districts towards neat and tidy habits in children, due undoubtedly to the teaching of hygiene in the schools and the good examples set by the more progressive parents.

But I consider that much can still be done to improve the home environment especially to provide better housing, more amenities and especially an adequate water supply for lavatories in the home, and a better separation of the house from the farm.

The Albury school is a consolidated school of Grade IV A with a roll number of 82 pupils of which 53 travel by bus and 3 by private cars; it has a spacious playing field, some beautiful English trees, a modern infant building, modern water lavatories, and, in general, a good rural environment on which to base our researches.

SECTION III  
SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS

One of the great disadvantages of a rural environment is the difficulty of playmates for pre-school children. The first child especially has no social intercourse at all with children of his own age, if the farm is any distance from the neighbouring farm and unless there are children of his own age (and sex) with whom he may play. The mothers on the farm are usually too busy to give very much attention to the children during the day and they are usually left to their own resources to play as best they can in the wool shed or down by the pond. This would be excellent if our pre-school child had a few playmates of his own age, but unfortunately he has nobody very often on a rural farm, or, at best, a baby sister.

In the case of one boy, P.A., to quote one of a few such cases, I found that, on coming to school at the age of five, he could not and did not know how to play with other children. He had to be guided in his play for some considerable time and, even now, after two years, is only just "getting the idea".

Again, there is the problem of oral expression and speech with such children. P.A. could not pronounce the simplest of words, had no conception of telling his teacher any simple fact. Peter has an I.Q. (Binet) of 110 and is

now beginning to make progress, although his oral expression is still painfully hesitant.

Another case is S.B., a boy of 7 years, the son of a roadman living well away from other children. This boy never had any opportunity of playing with other children of his own age and, although he has an I.Q. of 107 with the Goodenough drawing test and 87 with the Binet test (the discrepancy no doubt due to his inability to express himself verbally) even now after two years at school seems to have practically no verbal ability.

I consider that these children have a low inherent verbal ability but that their isolated pre-school life has considerably aggravated the trouble. Perhaps, in a child of high inherent verbal ability the retardation caused by pre-school isolation would pass unnoticed.

Another boy, P.B., has admitted to his parents that he had "ethereal friends" to whom he talked and with whom he played. He could describe them and could tell about the dialogues. This boy had no symptoms of dementia and the "ethereal friends" departed when he started school, but a danger was there.

I contend that the problem of social maladjustments in rural environments is a real one and, unfortunately, in many cases, is not solved by the natural social intercourse of

school environment. In the case of another boy, D.C., who is of I.Q. 76 Otis in Fl, I find that his poor speech and stumbling oral expression is the apparent outcome of an isolated pre-school life.

I find no such case in the school from township children, where the houses are closer together and the children play together at each others homes or in the domain.

Boys seem to be worse than girls in this respect, but I feel sure that in one case, a girl R.Mc. of seven, her poor oral expression and shyness is due to an isolated pre-school environment.

The solution is a simple one if finances are available, to establish Kindergartens for pre-school children from say three to five years, attached to consolidated schools, and, incidentally, improve transport facilities, especially in comfort of seating, to and from these schools. Attendance need not be very regular, but I am sure that many parents would be glad of that service especially if a specialist in pre-school child care was made available. This department should be absolutely separate and distinct from the infant department of the primary school.

SECTION IV

HEALTH

I find that the country children, provided that they live in a rural environment such as Albury and not in a semi-rural environment as Herbert -- to quote the example given by Dr. Walmsley, the school Medical Officer -- are much healthier than children in town and city areas. By health here, I mean the term to be used very generally and to include all aspects of physical well-being.

The general health of my own three children who came from Dunedin two and a half years ago has improved considerably according to the latest examination by Dr. Walmsley; and they were by no means in bad health then. Climate, height above sea-level, and mere change plays an important part, but the children around Albury are exceedingly healthy and Dr. Walmsley reported that she was well pleased with the school as a whole. Fresh air, plenty of exercise in the wide, open paddocks, plenty of good fresh food and a variety of fresh vegetables contribute to the children's well being.

The following table of age, height, weight and indices of nutrition show that there is not a single child examined who is suffering from malnutrition. The average or mean percentage difference from standard norms is  $.4^+$ ,  $\sigma = 10$  giving  $EM = 2$ . This gives, using McCall's tables of chances, the chances of 42.8 to 1 that there is a real superiority in

Albury school over the national norm. While this figure is not high, it is reasonable to contend that a rural environment has a definite advantage.

TABLE OF INDICES OF NUTRITION

	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Normal</u>	<u>% diff.</u>
1.	F.P.	12	56"	79	77	3 +
2.	V.C.	13	56"	103	79	30 +
3.	R.I.	14	62"	95	103	8 -
4.	J.C.	14	65"	132	118	12 +
5.	T.Mc.	14	60"	98	95	3 +
6.	A.N.	13	60"	96	94	2 +
7.	A.D.	14	62"	100	103	3 -
8.	S.T.	14	59"	86	94	9 -
9.	B.B.	13	59"	115	92	25 +
10.	R.W.	15	66"	121	125	3 -
11.	M.G.	14	62"	115	106	8 +
12.	B.A.	13	59"	101	92	10 +
13.	J.G.	13	56"	89	78	14 +
14.	A.M.	12	58"	87	84	4 +
15.	D.M.	12	59"	82	88	7 -
16.	O.T.	13	59"	84	89	6 -
17.	M.D.	11	55"	81	73	11 +
18.	V.T.	11	57"	77	80	4 -
19.	D.C.	12	60"	90	93	3 -
20.	C.C.	10	53"	70	67	4 +
21.	B.M.	12	60"	93	93	0

	Initials	Age	Height	Weight	Normal	% diff.
22.	K.P.	11	56"	74	77	4 -
23.	D.P.	11	56"	70	77	9 -
24.	C.C.	11	60"	109	91	20 +
25.	J.S.	12	65"	123	112?	10 +

Continuing the health aspect of education, I should like to mention that, in a recent inspection of children at Albury, the school Medical Officer reported that there was not a single case of dental caries in the school. This fact is perhaps not exceptional today, but a few years ago, before the establishment of school dental clinics, the worst feature of rural schools was neglected dental caries, due, as far as I can ascertain, to two factors: firstly, difficulty and expense of travelling to a dentist, and, secondly, failure of parents to realise need for regular dental treatment. Both of these causes disappear with the establishment of a school dental clinic, parents becoming educated by talks and lessons of dental nurses and teachers.

One serious difficulty in a rural consolidated school is the question of lunch at school. Children in a farming community usually rise early in the morning, although from data obtained from children and parents, it was found that out of sixty-three children, the following were the numbers that rose in the morning at the various times:

<u>Time of rising</u>	<u>Number of children</u>
6 a.m.	3
6.30 a.m.	5
7 a.m.	27
7.30 a.m.	19
8.00 a.m.	9

The times were taken to the nearest half-hour and were considered to be the average times, no notice taken of odd exceptional cases.

A strange feature was that there was no correlation between age and time. The rising habits depend seemingly on the household arrangements, the earliest risers being children of "Married couples" working for a farmer.

Having breakfast fairly early, and having plenty of exercise before school - buses arrive usually one-quarter hour before opening time -- the children are really in need of a good meal at 12.15 p.m., whereas the majority of the school, sixty-one out of eighty-two bring a lunch, which is usually the average type of lunch, jam and meat sandwiches, cake and fruit when procurable. Getting fruit in a rural area is a difficulty, unless fruit trees are grown, which is somewhat difficult at Albury owing to adverse climatic conditions. The nearest green-grocer is at Fairlie, at least ten miles distant -- in some cases twenty-one miles distant, making the task of giving fresh

fruit in school lunches a difficult business. The school milk supply has augmented the school lunch and, by having the milk at 11 a.m., the children have not complained of being hungry. Parents have told me that before the introduction of the milk-in-schools scheme; their children were over hungry at 12.30 p.m., the time the school used to finish until two years ago for lunch.

In the winter months, cocoa is served but many children tire of a cup of cocoa or else do not like it. This led me to try to get soup provided each day; but no one in the township, at present, will consider making it and the time needed prevents children from doing the work themselves, and then fairly strict supervision would be necessary. I consider if the government paid so much for each pupil having lunch at school to the school committees, soup could be provided. I am trying, at the moment, to get the parents to pay so much each week and to get someone in the township to make four gallons of soup each day during the winter term. If this succeeds, I shall be quite sure that the midday meal is adequate.

Coming under health is the problem of sufficient sleep for school children. In order to get data and information, I made careful enquiries from children, parents and others, checking data as far as possible. I may say now that information regarding actual hours of sleep is very difficult

to obtain as parents very often unwittingly mislead as to actual times of going to sleep and the time considered to be the actual time to go to bed. I have been told, in many cases, that the parents try to get the children to bed by that time but often do not succeed for at least a half-an-hour later.

I may add that, although these times may be the time children spend in bed and not the time they are asleep, I have observed only one case where a boy seems as though he is not getting sufficient rest. This boy, D.P., is an only son, of twelve years and is allowed to play with other boys till their bed-time and, on returning home, is allowed to stay up till 9.30 p.m., then reading in bed on occasions. He rises at 7 a.m.

Out of sixty-seven cases studied, I discovered the following numbers have bed-time at these hours. These children range from five years to thirteen years and with such small number do not warrant being analysed by age groups; in the main, the younger the earlier.

<u>Bed-time</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
7 p.m. or before	11
7.30 p.m.	7
8 p.m.	29
8.30 p.m.	16
9 p.m.	3
9.30 p.m.	1

I found that some of these children go straight to sleep, some read in bed, some lie awake and think. Again here the information is rather vague, but I found a striking correlation that children below average in ability or I.Q. are generally those who go straight to sleep. The brighter children seem to read or lie awake, but, as this was observed in upper school only, the few cases warrant only mention of the observed fact.

Discrepancies in number of cases in various tables indicate that I could not get accurate information for rising and bed-time in all cases.

From the cases I have, I worked out time of being in bed, the number of cases being sixty.

<u>Time in bed</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
12 hours	10
11 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours	12
11 hours	21
10 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours	10
10 hours	6
9 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours	1

Of the sixty-seven children listed in time of going to bed the following additional data was obtained:

Number who read in bed	23
Number who go straight asleep	28
Number who lie awake or talk	16

Those who read in bed, read from a few minutes up to three quarters of an hour, while the time of lying awake is too unreliable to consider.

Many lie awake in the morning, some read in the morning before getting up, but, again, no accurate information was available.

Summing up, I consider that all children, except one, have an adequate amount of sleep.

Before leaving the question of amount of sleep, I shall deal with the problem of listening to radio in the evening. Out of seventy-five children, seventy-two have a radio in the home, only three being without a radio. Of these seventy-five cases, thirty-five children have access to a piano in the home and sixty-one have books that they can read and understand.

As far as listening in to the radio is concerned, I could not find any case of a child listening in late at night or not getting sufficient rest because of radio serials, except in the possible case of D.P. and the case of I.G., who is kept awake by the radio if his parents are listening in.

The most interesting fact discovered was that the serial "Dad and Dave" is so popular with primary school children from a few infants up to F.2. Obtaining information in

seventy-two cases, I analysed the listening in thus:

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Number who listen</u>
Dad and Dave	45
Children's Hour	22
Music	6
Other serials	8
War News	1

The serial "Dad and Dave" is listened to from 3YA at 7.30 - 7.45 p.m.; 3YA is the only station that may be heard with reasonable clarity on every night, which may account for the popularity of "Dad and Dave". Or perhaps common rural interests? I would suggest a feature of educational value based on similar lines, if that is possible, be considered. Of course, if 3ZB was heard in the Albury district more clearly, the above results might be very much different.

Fourteen children do not listen in to anything in particular, or not at all, mainly those in the infant classes or lower standards.

A final point which, I think needs discussing before leaving the section of health is the problem arising from dances in the country areas. In rural districts, parents do not have the same opportunities of getting help in minding children when they go out to local dances or evenings. In a city, it is possible to pay someone or to

ask a neighbour to mind the children; but, in a rural district, when a dance is being held -- and at the present time with so many young people away it is not very often -- everyone wants to go to it.

In this district and from what I have seen and heard in most rural districts, the parents take their children with them. Baby sleeps in the car while the others play around fairly quietly on the stage or near their parents.

At first view, this seems a serious problem, allowing children sometimes six or seven to be up to midnight and maybe later. On making inquiries, however, I find firstly, that most dances and functions are held on Friday night, secondly that children have a rest from end of school until before getting ready to go, and, thirdly, they make up their sleep the following morning. This would be a serious problem if it was a weekly happening but, in the Albury district during the past two years, only twice have functions been held during the week at which children were present and, on the average, one function every six weeks. I have not observed any ill-effects on children at school, through lack of sleep, although on the two occasions when functions were held during the week, children were absent from school on the following day.

Help for mothers in rural areas would, in many cases,

solve the problem, but, of course, it is solved simply in a few homes by the father and the mother taking turns at going out to these functions. I find that where the farmers' wives have housekeepers or maids, the children are not brought to dances. It is better for the children to be taken out rather than left at home by themselves as, I know, happens in city areas. Excitement does not have such lasting effects as fear.

SECTION V  
MEDICAL SERVICES

Without going into the history of the free medical services in the school, I should like to consider some of the implications in rural areas which, I am afraid, will apply equally to city areas.

During the last two and a half years Albury school has had two medical inspections, one on the 18th and 19th November, 1942, the other on 8th February, 1945. Roughly one day and a half was taken over the earlier inspection and out of a roll of ninety-three pupils, only fifty-eight were examined, the remaining thirty-five being absent, due to a chicken-pox epidemic in the district at that time. The time taken for the inspection was no longer than seven hours, giving an average time of seven and a half minutes for each inspection. Although a return visit was mentioned, this did not eventuate.

On the recent visit one day was taken and sixty-seven pupils were examined by the Doctor and nurse out of a roll of seventy-four, seven pupils being absent. This time five hours was taken which works out at four and a half minutes for each pupil, without allowing for the writing up of case notes, prescriptions etc.

As it happens, not one of the thirty-five pupils who were absent at the first visit and who are still on the roll,

happened to be absent on the second visit; but I maintain it could have very easily happened, in which case a pupil may have had no medical inspection from 1939 until perhaps 1948.

This means also that one school pupil has an average medical inspection of six minutes, twice in six years, or an average of two minutes every twelve months.

I consider that the medical services should be very greatly extended especially in the country districts. The nearest doctor is at Fairlie ten miles from the Albury district and the difficulty of getting to the doctor or of getting the doctor to Albury is worrying and expensive, and parents will not take their children unless the occasion is absolutely necessary. Hence preventative work in the schools is most essential if we are to progress in health education. One doctor for the whole of South Canterbury is overworking the doctor and nurse, and, as a service, is hopelessly inadequate.

Compare the dental services, with one nurse to about every four hundred children where each pupil is inspected twice a year, and may receive on the average two to three hours work each year. This service, too, is being expanded every year and is for preventative work with teeth only, one small part of the whole body. Hence at the recent

inspection the school was without a single case of dental caries.

I would suggest that each district should have a resident doctor, whose duties would be to look after the health of every child and adult in that district, to carry out remedial treatment, to examine thoroughly every man, woman and child at least every six months, to dispense suitable medicines, the services to be paid by our contributions to social security, plus a subsidy if necessary.

SECTION VI  
OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Recreation, play, healthy sport and some form of light daily duties are essentials in the educative process, applicable equally to town and to country. In the past, it seemed that country children lacked the activity and agility of town children in their play and recreation and this could be attributed to too much hard work, isolation and lack of playmates, heavy boots necessary to walk a mile or two to school in, lack of organised games at school which was very often too small to organise suitable games, lack of suitable physical education.

Nowadays I find that country children in a properly organised consolidated school lack nothing of the activity and the agility of the town child. In this district, there are only two boys at the most who have fairly hard work to do at home. One, I.C., has to drive the tractor at home at busy times and a large garden to look after, while the other, B.F., has to help in his father's garage, in which, I know, he is interested.

By adopting light drill uniforms and barefeet or sandshoes for physical education and games, we have succeeded in getting a maximum of activity out of the children, and I can safely say that the activity in the playground and at drill and games is better than I have seen in many town schools.

The small school, however, of ten to twenty pupils, ranging from five year olds to fourteen or fifteen year olds is very difficult to organise for games. The boy in Form 2 perhaps has to play with a boy in Standard 1 or 2 and so on. This is a splendid argument in favour of consolidation, added to the fact that children are conveyed to school and are not too tired to play on account of a long tramp to school along hard roads or across paddocks.

As mentioned in the section on Social Adjustments, the main difficulty is lack of playmates in the home, which is most serious at the pre-school age, but which seems to become less so after a child goes to school. The children have roughly one hour and a quarter to play together each day, and as the playground is divided into three age groups, the children soon find playmates of their own age and size.

Most children in rural districts have their daily duties to do at home, an excellent habit in character formation. Usually the duties are not arduous, and I found collecting the information that most children are quite proud that they have some little responsibility in the home. The range of jobs is very wide, milking the cow, separating, coal, wood, washing dishes, feeding hens, calves, ducks, lambs, setting table, to bringing in the mail. Out of seventy-five children including five year olds, only five have no set work to do at home.

All children in the school have some little home preparation, too, a few word-cards for word recognition in the infant room, to spelling or tables in the senior school. The work is arranged so that there is plenty of reading, history, geography and so on, if they feel that they would like to do some. No set written homework, however, is ever given, but it is surprising how much is sometimes done willingly.

I consider the children of the Albury district have quite sufficient outside activities to ensure a healthy activity of mind and a healthy activity of body.

SECTION VII  
CONSOLIDATION.

The first aspect of consolidation I shall touch on is the travelling of the children to school each day by motor bus. The district is divided into two distinct parts. One road goes roughly south-west from Albury to Mt. Nesson, serving all the Mt. Nesson district. This road is eleven and a half miles from the school to the last family whose children are conveyed to the Albury school.

The second road traverses the north-western and western areas of Albury Park, Tengawai, Camp Valley and Chamberlain and is arranged as a round trip of twenty-six miles, the bus travelling the same way morning and afternoon to allow the pupils who make a long trip in the morning, to have the short trip in the afternoon. The first pupil is picked up three miles from Albury, is conveyed around the whole route, this arrangement not being satisfactory, but, at the present, impossible to arrange otherwise.

This Chamberlain bus leaves Albury at 7.52 a.m. picking up A.H. at 8 a.m., the farthest away pupil, C.C., at 8.45 a.m., the last pupil, J.C., at 8.55 a.m. arriving at the school at 9 a.m., a quarter of an hour before assembly. In the afternoon A.H. is home at 3.30 p.m. about 8 mins after leaving school, C.C. is home at 4.15 p.m. and the last boy out of the bus at 4.25 p.m. so that each pupil has roughly sixty-eight

minutes travelling time each day.

Out of the total of fifty-three children who travel in the two buses, only four dislike bus travelling, one on the Chamberlain route and three on the Mt. Nessing bus. The remaining forty-nine are quite sure about the fact that they enjoy coming to school in the bus. Two of the children who do not like the bus journey are of the same family and have the least distance to go, just over three miles, about seven minutes ride. The other boy who dislikes the travelling on the Mt. Nessing bus also has a short distance of three and a half miles to travel.

The Mt. Nessing bus conveys sixteen pupils. The bus travels to the terminus empty and begins picking up pupils on the return trip, the longest time for any one pupil in the bus being thirty minutes, the shortest seven minutes, making a total travelling time range, per day, from fourteen minutes to sixty minutes.

Owing to war conditions, the buses are not perfect as far as comfort is concerned, but are in good running order and the service is really quite satisfactory. After the war, both firms -- the two buses are operated by different firms -- have assured me of their intention to improve the seating accommodation.

Those districts are very well served, but south-east, the Rocky Gully area, is dependent on private cars for which payment is made at nine pence per return trip which is by no means sufficient and two cars have to travel each day for three pupils, while two children further away, although one is over six years old, are not able to get to any school, the pupils being enrolled with the correspondence school.

Parents who a few years ago were strongly against consolidation are unanimous now in their belief in the value of consolidation, and I have not heard one parent complain about the fairly long bus journey, even in the winter-time when twenty to twenty-five degrees of frost is not uncommon.

I have dealt with the advantages of consolidation under the section on Social Adjustments and Health and will deal further with it under Attainments.

Suffice it is to say that, with regard to the actual travel, rural children are in some ways better off than town children. All except two pupils in Albury district are picked up at their gates and carried right to the school gate in reasonably comfortable and warm buses. The township children are worst off, having to ride bicycles or walk on wet and cold days. I feel the system is a sound one.

SECTION VIII

ATTAINMENTS.

Among others, attainment depends on the ability of the child primarily, and on the standard of the teaching; without ability a child attains little, but an able child will not attain much without sound teaching, kindly control and a well-organized school.

I understand that, from investigations in England and New Zealand, it has been found that children in rural areas have a lower average intelligence quotient than that of town and city children and the Albury district seems to bear out this contention.

The following are the results of intelligence tests of forty-nine pupils, comprising thirteen infants and thirty-six pupils of S.3,4,5 and 6. I realise that these figures are far from being a reliable index of I.Q.'s of rural pupils or even of the Albury school, but are results from the two ends of the school in 1944.

TABLE OF INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF 49 PUPILS OF

ALBURY SCHOOL

<u>I. Q.'S</u>	<u>f.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>fd.</u>	<u>fd.<sup>2</sup></u>
125 - 129	2	6	12	72
120 - 124	0	5	0	0
115 - 119	4	4	16	64
110 - 114	5	3	15	45

I. Q.'s	f.	d.	fd.	fd. <sup>2</sup>
105 - 109	5	2	10	20
100 - 104	7	1	7	7
95 - 99	4	0	0	0
90 - 94	4	-1	-4	4
85 - 89	5	-2	-10	20
80 - 84	5	-3	-15	45
75 - 79	5	-4	-20	80
70 - 74	1	-5	-5	25
65 - 69	2	-6	-12	72
	49		-6	454

$$\text{Mean} = \text{A.M.} + \frac{\sum fd}{N} \times \text{Int.}$$

$$= 97.5 + \frac{-6}{49} \times 5$$

$$= 97.5 - .6 = 96.9$$

$$\text{Median} = 95 + \frac{2\frac{1}{2}}{4} \times 5$$

$$= 98.1$$

$$\sigma = \left[ \sqrt{\frac{\sum fd^2}{N} - \left( \frac{\sum fd}{N} \right)^2} \right] \times \text{Int.}$$

$$= 15.2$$

This gives

$$\epsilon M = \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$= 2.17$$

Therefore, insofar as the data is correct, the mean will lie

between 94.73 and 99.07, the chances of which being at least two to one.

It seems, therefore, that these children on the average are below the national norm. of 100, the chances of which are twelve to one.

However, this small difference, if real, would not cause a great deal of falling off of attainment and I consider the percentage difference to be really negligible.

From my experience, however, in the past, teaching in secondary departments of three district high schools, I have found pupils from small country schools are far behind in attainment those pupils from the central schools and considered it to be due to three main reasons. Firstly, the teacher having to teach a multiplicity of classes, in some cases, the whole school; secondly, the inexperience of those teachers who were usually almost straight from training college, where, I have been assured many times, they have not been taught how to teach; and, thirdly, following out of the second, the standard of attainment aimed at by the teachers has been too low.

With consolidation, the first reason does not disappear but is considerably weakened, as in the case of Albury changing with consolidation from a sole charge to a three teacher school, one teacher having the infants only, for

example. The second reason disappears as at the present time a Grade IV school headmastership cannot be achieved under twenty years' service. This, unfortunately, does not always eliminate the third reason, but perhaps the publication of the new text books may help to show teachers the minimum standard required at least.

I consider, therefore, that a school of three teachers or more should have no difficulty in keeping fairly near enabling their pupils to reach the attainment of city children. I realise that in many country districts, especially in dairying districts the children have to work hard both morning and night and early rising and early to bed at night prevents children from doing any reading and the like at home, attainment suffering as a consequence. This child labour could be prevented by Act of Parliament. Anyway, no such problem occurs in the Albury district and, as mentioned before, most children do a little study at home, even if only reading, and it is surprising how this little amount at home preparation helps the child in attainment.

SECTION IX

MORALITY AND BEHAVIOUR

Briefly let me discuss the moral aspects and sex aspects of education in a rural community.

In a widely scattered rural district, children are together in groups only during school hours and, if this time is well organised, country children can be much better provided for than town children, who may so easily acquire bad habits through unsupervised play with bad companions.

At Albury, the children may come to school at 8.45 a.m. if they live in the township, and the seniors immediately take out the footballs or cricket gear of which they are in charge and have a real good game, the teacher being about if not actually taking part in the game, but letting them run their own activities. Morning and afternoon intervals find the pupils active, while after a supervised lunch, they are again back to their play. The teachers, at least once a week, direct the play, suggest a new game, but then let the children work out ideas for themselves. Once a week boys and girls play longball together and there is no difficulty at all, both sexes playing sensibly together. I consider this play at school under "distant" supervision to be the best type of social activity. The only difficulty I have had was when I first arrived at the school and found that some of the senior boys of the township were getting together after

school and behaving badly around the village, usually, I discovered, telling their parents when they reached home that they were kept in at school. They now go straight home from school. However, now I feel, and hope, that the attitude of the pupils has improved. For at least eighteen months I have not heard a single complaint about the behaviour of any child in the school.

There are three Sunday schools in Albury, Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic, the Anglican having an attendance of eighteen, the Presbyterian eleven pupils and the Roman Catholics seventeen of school age. Some of these children come a considerable distance, one riding a horse three miles and then coming by car five and a half miles. I do not know any figures concerning percentage attendance at Sunday schools, but I am confident that this number of over fifty percent of school roll attending Sunday school is not exceeded in the average urban areas.

Sex behaviour in Albury district offers no problem, as country children, with their knowledge of animals, have not that silly attitude concerning sex that I have noticed in some town children. The boys and girls at the Albury school talk naturally together, play sensibly together, and, as I said before offer no problems other than the usual behaviour characteristics of the average healthy child.

SECTION X

LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

Rural children now have the advantage of the Country Library Service, a marvellous boon to schools away from main centres. At Albury we receive sixty books on the average for S.1 to F.2 and the pupils run their own library, change the books, see that they are looked after and, in general, do the task very well.

Although the numbers vary week by week on the average, thirty-eight children each week change their books. All those who take books out assure me that they either read them themselves or have the books read to them, and enjoy them.

Nowadays, too, rural schools have their own reference libraries built up from school funds. At Albury, until two and a half years ago, every year the committee spent roughly £12 on prizes for all the children in the school. These prizes were typical school prizes, fairly expensive books and usually too difficult for the recipients to read with enjoyment, and, in many cases, the books were not read at all. During the last three school break-ups, no prizes have been awarded, the money being used to build up a reference library of which there are sixty-seven books on geographical, historical and scientific topics. Modern attractive books are procured e.g. "How and why Discovery Club" written in simple English and copiously illustrated.

I consider in all schools prizes should be abolished -- motivation to be secured through interest -- and the money used to build up a modern reference library, most especially in schools in rural districts where children have not the same access to reference libraries.

Albury district is poorly catered for musically. About eighteen children wish to learn the piano and the only music teacher available is a girl of eighteen who lives five miles away and who cycles to Albury to teach a few pupils on Saturdays and sometimes at lunch-time and after school on weekdays. There is no teacher of elocution or dancing. If a good music teacher were available, piano lessons could be organised into the school curriculum, as all education should centre around the school if possible. Albury has few cultural facilities, not even a cinema, if that could be classed as one.

SECTION XI

SECONDARY EDUCATION

In my opinion, the provision made for secondary education in rural districts is totally inadequate, and steps should be taken to ensure that each child has the same opportunity for secondary study, whether in the town or in the country. I know that with increased boarding bursaries having been made available a move in the right direction has been made.

Let me give some examples of pupils leaving Albury school to go on to secondary education.

The nearest District High School is at Fairlie, but to that school, no conveyance is possible at present, and, if a bus were put on between Albury and Fairlie, pupils could travel on our school buses and connect with the bus to Fairlie ten miles away, arriving there in time for school.

The District High School that most of our pupils go to is Pleasant Point District High, seventeen miles away, the pupils leaving Albury at 8.33 a.m. and arriving back at Albury station at 6.15 p.m. if the train is up to time. During the last fortnight, however, the average time of arrival has been 7.8 p.m., one night as late as 7.45 p.m.

Two pupils then have to cycle three miles and four miles

respectively, making their day far too long. There is no supervision by teachers in the train and behaviour problems arise as a consequence, although I have not heard of any trouble recently in that respect.

Some pupils travel each day to the Timaru Technical School to learn "engineering" and "dress-making" and "hairdressing". They have a 29 mile journey, travelling by the same train as referred to above. They arrive at the Technical school normally at 10.30 a.m., although one morning last week they did not arrive until after morning school, the train having been delayed.

Other pupils board at Timaru B.H.S., but only those parents who can afford it or those interested in their children's health and future, consider this.

Some go to private boarding establishments in Timaru and elsewhere, but in all cases the boarding bursary is not sufficient to cover all costs.

Two pupils take correspondence courses from the Correspondence School and, while in no way wishing to belittle this excellent institution, I consider that these two pupils are not making much progress, mainly because they are at home on the farm and lessons have to come a very poor second to helping with the farmwork. Both are really just filling

in time until they are fifteen years of age.

I feel that besides the "long day" aspect of travelling to school, the whole system is a haphazard affair, and here are a few solutions.

Firstly, that all small schools should be consolidated on to a natural centre, which centre should have a D.H. School, with a qualified teacher for the secondary department, or each consolidated school should have adequate conveyance to the nearest D.H. School, such conveyance meeting the buses to the consolidated school at that school.

All pupils of ability and those who intend remaining at Secondary school for more than three years should be given adequate bursaries to enable them to board at a town secondary school, preferably after two years at the local district high school, not after passing School Certificate, such boarding to be compulsory for those pupils at an authorised boarding school.

No pupils should be allowed to pass the local D.H. School to go to a Technical school to take a subject such as "hairdressing", all such trades to be learnt after leaving secondary school under a "paid apprentice" system. No pupils should be allowed to take a correspondence course at the Correspondence school unless at least three miles from any bus route to a consolidated school.

The pupils who go to boarding school after two years at

the local high school, may go to a private boarding school but all private schools of primary level should be closed where adequate primary schools are established already.

SECTION XII

ADULT EDUCATION

Last year I helped to begin a W.E.A. group at Albury and had a great deal of difficulty in getting people to it on account of petrol restrictions, but, after the war I consider there will be great enthusiasm for adult discussion and group study.

I consider that the consolidated school should be the centre of all such activity and that the headmaster of such a school should be qualified and paid accordingly to organise his district, for adult education, material and ideas being sent from the University Extension Department. There should be a woodwork or craft room at each centre, cookery rooms and the like and a definitely organised time-table worked out by the headmaster for adult education.

In this district, it is difficult, under the present system of the W.E.A. to get all together interested in the same things. One young fellow who owns a threshing-mill came along to a meeting last year and told me he wanted to learn bookkeeping, when our group was discussing "After the War, What?" in which subject he was not apparently interested. I put him on to a correspondence course.

In this connection, many schools have a parent-teacher's association doing excellent work, and I consider that all this

should be linked with the adult education, the staff of the school being the instructors, together with paid qualified outside teachers. At Albury, for example, an agricultural expert could be at the school say one night a month to discuss farm management problems. Again a qualified woodwork teacher could be at the school one night a fortnight, all of these instructors having a regular itinerary at different schools. The headmaster would instruct in some subjects, and be responsible for the organisation of the whole scheme. He is called upon as it is in most cases to organise the district without any authority and without any pay.

SECTION XIII

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND CONVENIENCES

When I arrived to take up my duties at the Albury school, then a roll of ninety-three pupils, I found a two-room building, built in 1882, windows facing north-west, housing three teachers, two of which taught in the one room. There was one tap on a tank at the back of the school which, in the winter, was frozen until 2 p.m. The lavatories were of the "post-hole" type and very unhygienic: there were two compartments in the girls' lavatory for forty-four girls, totally inadequate at intervals.

There were not sufficient rooms in the residence, no hot water, no wash basin and no water system in the lavatory.

After a great deal of effort, there is now a new up-to-date open air classroom for the infants, modern running water lavatories, eight drinking fountains, wash-basin, hot water, and a water lavatory in the residence, to which an extra room has been added, making the buildings and conveniences reasonable. Why was this not done prior to 1943?

To educate children in decent, clean, healthy ways of life, clean modern classrooms and conveniences are essential. And in many ways it is more important that these amenities should be in rural districts, where, in many cases, the homes

leave much to be desired, than in city schools. The teachers, also, should not be asked to live in conditions they are expected to condemn in the classroom.

In a rural district, cleaning the schools offers a problem, as so few people are available for such a position as janitor of the school. With children travelling by bus, very little time is available for children to clean the school and the lighting of fires usually falls on the headmaster.

Every school should have a full-time janitor, gardener and general odd-jobs man. At Albury, there is a fair amount of lawn which I find is too much to ask F.2 boys to do. If the lawns are kept trimmed and neat, the children must miss a great amount of school work. I heard of a case very recently of a school where a parent alleged that his son was more often outside with the lawnmower than inside the classroom.

Expense is the difficulty with full time janitors, but why not keep the school grounds so beautiful that parents would visit the school as parents now visit the Botanical gardens: and a child nurtured in such surroundings "will commend beautiful objects, and gladly receive them into his soul, and grow to be noble and good." If Plato's theories are sound, is the expense too great? Let us, therefore, have modern buildings, hygienic amenities and beautiful grounds, both in rural districts and in the towns.

SECTION XIV

CONCLUSION.

On looking through the various data, I realise that perhaps the Albury district is not typical of all rural areas, but it seems fairly typical of mixed sheep farming areas in New Zealand. I have discussed the topic with many parents, and all have assured me that for the primary education of their children they do not desire any outstanding changes. In the main, they are very satisfied with the consolidated school, and the educational facilities it offers.

Many parents (and pupils) have told me that their children would be very unhappy at the thought of going to live in the city and, with them, I am wholly in accord. As long as progress is made towards better educational facilities in rural districts, along the lines I have indicated, a rural district, in my opinion, has much to commend it as a sound environment for primary school children.