

EXTRACT FROM HEALTH INSPECTOR'S

REPORT

DATED 15TH NOVEMBER,

1931

CLAUSE 1.

With reference to the letter and complaint from the Mayfield Parents and Citizens' Association stating that school children are being taught in a dirty, damp and musty room of the old residence, such letter having been submitted to me for report, I herewith append same:-

In consequence of the above complaint, I visited the school on the 9th instant at 2.30 p.m. and in company with Mr. Shields the Headmaster, I made an inspection of the building in question, as follows:-

OLD SCHOOL RESIDENCE

The old school residence Mr. Shields states was erected in 1874.

No. 1 Room is a room 13 feet 6 inches by 14 feet, Miss. Miller was teaching a class of 58 scholars of ages approximately 10 years. The plaster of the ceiling and walls was broken in places, and very dirty, windows are provided in the eastern and southern walls, the bottom sashes are movable, but the top sashes are a fixture, consequently some of the children are obliged to sit between these two openings and are therefore continually sitting in a draught.

Four other Rooms in this building are unused and in a very dirty and dilapidated condition, and a musty smell as of dampness was very noticeable. The roof is covered with shingles in a very broken condition, and is not weather proof. The spouting and downspouts have decayed and are useless. Many panes of glass are broken. This portion of the building was occupied as the main school prior to the erection of the new school.

No. 6 Room has a floor measurement of 40 feet by 18 feet. Mrs. Henry was teaching a class of 54 scholars and Mr. Shields stated that in bad weather Miss. Sharp is forced out of the weathershed and to house her class of 57 scholars in this room also. The walls are apparently damp and dirty. There are windows at each end of the room, but some of the sashes are immovable.

Cloakroom Walls are dirty and broken in places, also several window panes broken.

No. 7 Room 30 feet by 21 feet Mr. Lloyd, teacher, and there are 50 scholars occupying the room. Walls very dirty. Three windows are provided in the southern wall only, and none in the opposite wall.

No. 8 Room 15 feet by 21 feet, Miss. Knight, teacher. This room is occupied by 54 infants. Walls dirty, ventilation defective, two windows in southern wall only.

No. 9 Room Kindergarten 40 feet by 40 feet. There are 60 scholars on the roll. Walls dirty, but the ventilation is good and there is plenty of cubic space for the children. I noticed also a weathershed in the yard had nailed up to the front of it to close out the afternoon sun three old bags opened out.

In view of the above, I think that something should be done immediately to alter the conditions now existing, for it is certainly not conducive to the best interests of the health of scholars to be housed under such conditions. Looking at it from an educational standpoint, it must have a very demoralising effect on the children and how can the subject of hygiene be taught to advantage when the scholar has only to look around and see the conditions under which he is daily housed. Mr. Shields stated that he has accommodation for 736 scholars and he has 996 on the roll. There is no doubt that Mayfield is growing rapidly, consequently these figures will grow also. Seeing that this school is so overcrowded, and in view of the fact that the school is on the extreme end of the Municipality, therefore forcing the children to walk from the west end and also from Tare Shire a distance of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles, I think the time has come when there should be at least a temporary school for infants and kindergarten children somewhere towards the west end of Mayfield, and therefore save these small children the walk they are forced to make. I therefore recommend that an urgent communication be forwarded to the Educational Department and the above facts brought under their notice.

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The Hon. T.D. Mutch, Minister for Education, accompanied by Mr. D. Murray, M.L.A., Mr. H. Connell, M.L.A., Mrs. Duncan, President, Mayfield Parents and Citizens' Association, Mr. Vincent, and Mr. Shields, Headmaster, Mayfield Public School, paid a visit of inspection to the Mayfield School on Saturday, 4th March, 1923.

The Minister inspected the Mayfield School buildings and Teacher's residence.

Mrs. Duncan, President of the Parents and Citizens' Association, presented a petition, requesting that immediate action be taken in regard to the re-modelling of the old building at the Mayfield Public School, which had already been condemned by the Waratah Municipal Council as unfit for habitation.

MRS. DUNCAN: We desire, Mr. Mutch, that you should make a personal visit to the old school buildings attached to the Mayfield Public School. You will notice on the building, which was built in 1874, that half of the roof is corrugated iron, whilst the other half is made of shingles, which have been perforated in numerous places. The spouting surrounding the building has rusted and broken away. We ask that you treat the matter of accommodation at this school as an urgent one. We believe that plans and specifications have been drawn up for the re-modelling of the school, and we have been told that the work has been delayed owing to financial stringency.

THE MINISTER: Are <sup>any of</sup> the rooms in the <sup>old</sup> ~~new~~ building not used or are they used by classes and does the same class occupy the one room all day?

MR. SHIELDS, HEADMASTER: The classes take their turn about to occupy the weathershed and these three old rooms. You will notice in one room, Mr. Mutch, that we have only forms for children to sit on. We have no desks or blackboards, and consequently the classes that are having reading lessons and other lessons that do not require the use of desks have to be accommodated in this room.

MRS. DUNCAN: In the old building in the Infants' Department we have accommodation for 50 in the Kindergarten, whereas we have 82 enrolled. In the Infants' Class room we have accommodation for 36 and the enrolment is 52. You will see that in these two rooms alone we have enrolled 65 more pupils than we have accommodation for. Including the portable room these two

rooms and the old bedroom in addition to the shed, which only accommodate 427, our total enrolment is 600. We would therefore ask you, Mr. Mutch, to do what you can to have the matter of accommodation dealt with at the earliest possible moment.

MR. D. MURRAY, M.L.A. You will remember, Mr. Mutch, my having brought this matter up before you on several occasions, and that you had informed me that owing to the case being a "B" one, and your not having sufficient money to deal with all the "A" cases the matter would have to stand over till the next financial year. I trust, however, that as you have now had an opportunity of inspecting these inadequate and dilapidated rooms in which the children are being taught you will see the necessity for classing this as an "A" case. Our enrolment at the school is increasing rapidly owing to the subsidiary industrial undertakings which are being erected in this locality. Notwithstanding the intimation made by you this afternoon in regard to the Breadmeadow Junior Technical School the number of students who will attend from this school would not be noticed because of the fact that we have applications for enrolment from children whom the school is unable to accommodate. There is another matter that I would like to bring before you, and that is the raising of the status of the Mayfield Public School. The Headmaster, Mr. Shields, has been instructed by the Department that he cannot enter into the formation of a 7th class. The pupils who are eligible for 7th class tuition do not wish to leave the school as in a number of instances the parents are not willing to allow them to travel to a school where there is a 7th class, and I would ask therefore that instructions be given that the Headmaster be allowed to form a 7th class.

At this juncture Mr. Murray presented a petition from the Parents and Citizens' Association requesting that the status of the Mayfield Public School be raised to that of an Intermediate High School, or failing that, a Junior Technical School. It was pointed out that a class of nearly 40 was ready to start secondary work, and it was anticipated that over 100 children would be sitting for the Qualifying Certificate Examination this year.

THE MINISTER: I will go into the matter of the establishment of a 7th class on my return to Sydney.

An inspection was then made of the grounds and teacher's residence.

Mr. Mutch was conducted over the teacher's residence by Mr. Shields.

It was pointed out that the lighting accommodation was extremely bad, as the lighting of more than one gas jet meant the low pressure of any other jets that were in use. The building inside was badly in need of a coat of paint. The teacher and his family were obliged to put newspaper coverings on the wall before they hung their clothes up, due to the fact that everything stuck to the wall. The back door had been put on upside down, and the bath in the bath room was in a leaking condition, and generally it was in a bad state of repair.

Mr. Murray pressed the Minister to addrd better lighting facilities and a coat of paint to the residence when the re-modelling of the old school building was being gone into.

THE MINISTER: I am satisfied that you are badly in need of accommodation here, and upon my return to Sydney I will have the plans and specifications brought up to date, with a view to alleviating the overcrowded conditions of the school at the present time.

With regard to the teacher's residence I will include instructions to be given that the painting of the residence and lighting arrangements be attended to.

The question of the playground and the fences is a matter that must necessarily stand over until a later period, due to the fact that we have many more urgent cases to attend to in the school buildings themselves in various districts before we can give attention to the repairing of fences.

The deputation then thanked the Minister, *and*

*withdrew*

*Mayfield*

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

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MARCH 22 \* 18036  
EDUCATION

**Urgent Case.**

Memorandum received by me at Public School, Mayfield, Newcastle, on Saturday, March 4th., 1922.

My visit to this school on Saturday, March 4th., convinces me that the Department cannot rely upon the reports of its Inspectors concerning the relative urgency of repairs and extensions necessary to the schools within their Inspectorates.

The condition of affairs at Mayfield is one of the worst I have seen in two years, yet it is classed as a "B" case.

In one of the buildings used as a classroom the rain pours down the walls, because half the roof is of rotten slates. Another room also used for classroom purposes is a dungeon, without desks, blackboard, or other equipment. The classes are constantly taught in open weather-sheds, exposed to the Western wind and sun.

If the Inspector in whose district Mayfield is situated knows of any works here or elsewhere in his district, it is his immediate duty to report them to the Head Office so that they may be attended to.

The plans, which, I understand, were prepared some time ago for the re-erecting of the old building at Mayfield and are supposed to be in the Office at Newcastle now, are to be sent down to the Head Office immediately with a view to their revision, so that the work of providing accommodation at Mayfield may be entered upon with the least possible delay.

The Teacher's residence at Mayfield is also a shocking disgrace to this Department, and improvements are necessary. Lighting, drainage and nocturnal, must be undertaken, concurrent with the provision of proper accommodation at the School building.

*T. D. Mitchell*  
Minister for Education.  
6/3/1922.

The Assistant Under-Secretary.

CHIEF CLERK  
23 MAR 1922

B.B.  
23 MAR 1922

*For immediate attention*

*S.H.S.*  
23/3/22

B.B.  
25 MAR 1922

*The Architect*  
*For attention. Please include*  
*lighting & repairs to residence in specifications*  
*and treat as an A1 Case*

*For us*

D.O.  
27 MAR 1922

*Pipe plan for residence 23/3/22*  
*Mr. [unclear]*