

37. You know of no case of the kind?—No; I cannot recall a case; but I think there is a distinction to be drawn in the case of children of a delicate organization, with great nervous susceptibility, more especially if they are ambitious and emulous; they may overstrain themselves in reading up for a scholarship or prize. But I think that, generally, in a state of robust physical health a child is not likely to devote himself to study unduly so as to cause overstraining. On the contrary, he is more likely to direct himself to physical recreation. I mean to say that where there is good health and functional activity boys will want to romp and play.

38. Then you think that the danger of breaking down from school-work at an early age is not to be regarded?—I think it has scarcely ever existed.

39. *Mr. Barron.*] Should there be, in your opinion, any distinction between the education given to children that are supposed to enter on the active duties of life at thirteen and that given to children who may be supposed to have time to devote to their education until it should be complete: what I ask is, would you make any difference from the foundation upwards between one case and the other?—I am of opinion that there is no need to differentiate the studies of such children until about the age of twelve on the average. I may state that in this respect my views have undergone some change within the last few years. Seven or eight years ago I was disposed to think that a differentiation should take place at about ten years of age. My observation of the progress made by children who have gone with Board scholarships to the higher schools at the age of twelve, with no learning beyond that provided in the standard syllabus, leads me to think that twelve is a better age than ten at which to begin to make any distinction. I think that a boy who begins to learn Latin at twelve is likely to be as much interested in it at eighteen, and to know as much of it, as if he had begun at eight years. As with other subjects, Latin cannot create an interest in the mind until a certain age and a certain degree of development have been reached.

40. In the case of a child that had to go into the world to earn his own living at thirteen or fourteen years of age, do you think it better that he should finish his course in the primary school, or that he should have the advantage of instruction on one, two, or three subjects that are taught to children in the secondary schools: which do you think would be better towards the future success of such a child in the world?—For the child who is to leave school at thirteen I think that the last three years spent in the primary school would be more likely to be useful to him than the same time spent in the elementary part of the work of the secondary school. Leaving the secondary school at the age of thirteen he would be found to have acquired only the beginnings of several subjects, and he would have reached no very useful degree of attainment in any.

41. Do you think it would be an improvement that a rudimentary knowledge of Latin should be taught in the primary schools within the period during which a child is there?—My impression is that, in the case of children whose education is to include any useful amount of Latin, the secondary school is the proper place for them after the age of twelve.

42. I am keeping in view the child who wants to go into the world at thirteen or fourteen years of age: whether elementary instruction in the higher subjects would be of importance to him?—I can conceive of elementary knowledge of Latin obtained during the last two or three years of primary school-life, supposing it to have been imparted by an enthusiastic and capable teacher, being a very valuable instrument of mental development, as laying the foundation of logical habits of thought, and as creating a taste for literary exactness; but for the ordinary child, in the hands of an ordinary teacher, I think that the Latin that would be learned in the last year or two of a school-life closing at thirteen or fourteen would not be of any great service.

43. I suppose there is a uniformity in the system of teaching in all the primary schools?—They all work according to the standards by which the subjects are prescribed. There is no doubt, however, that the idiosyncracies of teachers infuse variety into the system as regulated by the standards. One teacher, for example, with an enthusiastic love of history, will give prominence to that subject, and make it interesting to his pupils; while another, who takes no interest in it himself, will treat the history-lesson as a mere task, and will be quite content if, in some mechanical way, he can prepare the children to pass the standard examination upon it. Such a teacher, however, may be himself enthusiastic with respect to other subjects of the school-course.

44. *Dr. Fitchett.*] I should like to ask the witness to what extent he considers our infant schools efficiently organized for proper infant teaching?—I think that in any school where there are three or four teachers satisfactory provision for infant children can be made.

45. Can you give any account of the number?—I can only give you an approximate answer: perhaps between one-third and one-fourth of the schools are able to make, what I consider, proper provision; but, as these are all comparatively large schools, they provide for a very large proportion of the children of the country.

46. *The Chairman.*] I gather from you that your experience is quite different as regards country schools?—The reason is that in small country schools there is not a sufficient number of teachers to make it possible to have properly-organized junior departments. The sending a child there at too early an age might perhaps do him as much harm as good, owing to the absence of the proper methods of instruction suited to young children. His attendance there might result in a permanent dislike to school as being an uninteresting place.

47. Do you agree that it would be advisable to raise the age in respect to children attending country schools, so as not to allow them to go there at such an early age?—If the question were simply as to the mere "advisability" in the interest of these children of admitting them at that age I should say, "Yes." But the question is complicated by other serious considerations. One consideration is this: that under the capitation allowance the income of the Boards, and consequently the fund from which the teacher's salary is derived, depends on the number of children attending. Every child between five and six counts for one, and is paid for by the State. It is the payment for the large number of these young children that makes it possible for the Board to maintain a larger number of schools than could otherwise be maintained.