

that the public examinations make a syllabus for us. There is not only the Junior Civil Service, but the Matriculation and University Scholarship Examinations. We must not depart too far from these, and we must not be accused of cramming if we follow this syllabus. We have the pupils for a certain time, and we must keep them in that narrow path which leads up to these examinations. So far as my school is concerned, in connection with agricultural instruction, it is in a non-farming district, and I would not introduce agriculture on any account whatever. Quite apart from the expense of the ground for experiments, I think you want expert agriculturists to carry out the training. It is no use an ordinary school-teacher trying to do it; and then there is the fact that perhaps only 10 per cent. of the children you are teaching agriculture to will take up agriculture. I think that is a waste of school time. I think that the physical-measurement course outlined by the Department is an excellent one, with a chemistry course to follow. It has been really the old-fashioned routine in the secondary schools, but I do not think any of the newer schemes have been an improvement on it, because you may have a boy going in for mining or agriculture, and his chemistry and physical measurements will help him in either of these things, but an agricultural training will only help, perhaps, the 10 per cent. That is my idea. In my own district I do not think agriculture is advisable at all. It might pay to have an agricultural course in a place like Palmerston North, but I do not think it would be successful in regard to small-staffed schools and town schools generally. I understand that the Director of the Lincoln Agricultural College and also a rather experienced agricultural instructor—a man from the west of Scotland—after twelve months' trial, both said they considered that an agricultural course as an adjunct to secondary-school training was impracticable. I really think, if boys are going in for agriculture, if they have two years as junior free-place pupils in a secondary school, they should then go on to some other institution of a more technical description, and there learn agriculture. It perhaps need not be such a big institution as Lincoln, but there should be special schools for agriculture. Of course the secondary schools could do a good deal by having what they call in America junior naturalist clubs and field clubs. In America the master who takes, say, a particular interest in nature-study will get ten or twelve boys together, and go out and study these things in the open, but not as a regular course of instruction. As to the ninth order of reference—"In what respects school instruction can be improved and made of more practical value in equipping pupils for their future careers"—I notice there is a new syllabus for certain subjects in the Junior Civil Service Examination, and also new regulations in regard to teachers' certificates, and also a new regulation insisting on practical-science certificates for any one who is being trained up to the New Zealand University. I think that is a splendid move. I think the Department might go a step further with regard to the teachers. The previous witness spoke about the teachers not being able to get their training. There are a number of pupils going through the secondary schools, and they have a course of chemistry, and keep note books. I think if the note-books were duly certified to, the Department might find it useful to accept these certified note-books as proof of a practical course having been carried out. If that were done, the pupils in the secondary schools would regard these note-books as very valuable things to take away from the schools. In regard to military training, I am a cadet enthusiast myself, and I have done a great deal of cadet work, but I think military training in our schools is apt to overshadow the really good physical training. It is only, I think, in the big boarding-schools of New Zealand, such as Nelson, Waitaki, or Wellington Colleges, that there is really good gymnastic and physical training being carried on. I think we want a more national system for building up the physique by means of gymnasiums and Swedish drill. It is a matter of administration, of course, but I think it might be possible to have male and female physical instructors to go about from school to school, and I think that would be more valuable than woodwork instructors.

4. Are you aware that is carried out in some districts?—I did not know that. I do not think that the ordinary teacher knows enough about physical training to train girls in deep breathing and things of that kind—it wants an expert. I also think the syllabus is overloaded. Some ten weeks ago I was speaking to the late Mr. McGowan, who used to get a grip of things pretty well. We were talking about strikes, and he said we would never stop strikes until we started teaching the pupils some elementary economics in every school in New Zealand. He said we should teach them about the value of wages, and so on. I merely repeat that opinion because Mr. McGowan was a man who was listened to with attention, and he seemed to think that an elementary knowledge of economics imparted in the schools would have some little effect in the next generation on the labour question. With regard to scholarships, I think there is no doubt that some schools, by undertaking special outside coaching for scholarships, get their candidates in ahead of more clever pupils. I know in my own case, pupils come to me with scholarships who are not always the best of their year—they are amongst the best, but some others very often beat them. Some teachers put in a great deal of extra time for coaching. I also want to refer to this matter of accrediting. The Education Department has made a start in accrediting. It may not be known to everybody that there are various ways for the junior free-place holder to become a senior free-place holder. One method is by examination, and another method is on the recommendation of the headmaster. That is, I think I am right in saying, practically the accrediting system, and that seemed very good in relieving the strain on the pupils from examination; but I find the Department generally examines our pupils after we accredit them. I may say the Department does not interfere with our classification; the Department has been very kind to us, and in my two years as head I have not had any of my pupils disqualified. I suppose the Department does this examining to satisfy itself that we are doing our work of recommending properly, but the pupil undergoes the strain of sitting for the examination which he is supposed to have escaped by reason of this system of accrediting.

5. *Mr. Wells.*] You spoke about high schools and district high schools: In the Thames district there is the High School at the Thames, and district high schools at Paeroa, Te Aroha and Waihi?—Yes.