

suggestion on reading. My suggestion in regard to reading is that we must try to develop the habit of reading in our schools. In the past we succeeded admirably in training children to read aloud from certain books, but the great number who went through the schools were not so imbued with love of reading that they have continued the habit after leaving school. My opinion is that if we are to develop any habit we must give more and more time to it daily, until the habit becomes confirmed; and I would like, if it were possible, for this to be done in the school. That means we must do more silent reading. Modern criticism of the old school of reading is this: that a man brought up to read aloud only gets into a very slow way of reading silently by himself, and I think evidence can be brought to prove that many people are capable of apprehending reading-matter two or three times more quickly than others. We have done nothing so far to train a child in quick, silent reading. If that is so, there must have been a great loss of time in our reading. Reading aloud affords an excellent opportunity for training in spoken language, and of course it will be kept for that purpose side by side with recitation.

11. Have you noticed impurity in the vowel sounds in many parts of New Zealand?—A member of the Commission noticed it in my school this morning, and it would have been strange if I had not noticed it before he went there.

12. Is that not the tendency throughout the Dominion?—Unfortunately I have had no experience elsewhere—I am looking forward to a trip to other countries—at present I cannot make comparisons in this way. What I have gathered in conversation with others is that we have drawn in so many children from different parts of the Empire that probably on the whole we have less faults in diction than you would find, say, in one district in England.

13. Would you approve of systematic exercises for a few minutes daily in voice-production?—Yes, if the teachers understood the principles. I think most teachers, like myself, have ruined their voices through ignorance, and that if we had had wise direction when younger we might have conserved our strength.

14. One of the witnesses referred to formal grammar: is it not within the right of any teacher now to use what is called formal grammar?—That is perfectly right.

15. If a teacher had an opportunity to draw up his own scheme of work and that scheme of work has to be approved by the Inspector, it rests largely with the Inspector whether or not formal grammar may be taught in the school?—I would make the reservation that under the present syllabus as I read it no Inspector has the right to come to my school and say, "You must teach these terms." The syllabus lays out a good course of grammar, but in practice I think all connected with education will admit that examinations set the standard rather than the syllabus. I want to make this qualification in regard to a headmaster making out the course. I do not know whether the attention of the Commission has been drawn to the fact that the population of New Zealand moves about very freely. Mr. Metge, headmaster of a school of a thousand children, told me that he admits about five hundred children in the year. That means he must lose a good many hundreds too. That is one of the greatest difficulties we have under a system which allows a teacher a very considerable latitude in framing the course of work. He may frame an ideal course, but he finds that of children coming to the Sixth Standard, perhaps 70 per cent. may have come from various schools. I think that is a point that must be kept in view in regard to syllabus work. For that reason I would like to see the English course as definite as possible, so that the really practical work is done as thoroughly as possible in all schools.

16. *Mr. Poland.*] You made some excellent suggestions in regard to improving the efficiency of teaching: have you any suggestions to make by which we can reduce the cost of education without impairing the efficiency?—I am afraid the Commission will find that not too hard to crack. I can make one suggestion by which some economy may be brought about—namely, the centralization of schools. I think the Commission could easily get from the Department or Education Boards figures that would prove that in some districts this is easily possible.

17. You believe there are districts in New Zealand where centralization could be very advantageously followed?—That is very common talk amongst teachers. I know, personally, of one good example at Coromandel.

18. Do you know anything about the rural course suggested by the Department and advocated by the Director of Technical Instruction for district high schools?—I remember one that came out, but I did not know the Department was responsible for it. My objection to that is that it does not provide sufficiently for the general education, and that it gives too great a bias towards agriculture.

19. Do you think there are too many subjects proposed to be dealt with in that course to enable children to get a general education as well?—Yes, I think the district high school should give as nearly as possible a broad general education. I quite approve of a bias towards rural life, as you will understand from my opening remarks. I think even in the towns there will not be much harm done by giving the children a bias towards open-air life, but I do not believe in early specialization.

20. Do you think that six hours per week to agriculture and one day per fortnight as a manual-training school would be sufficient for these two subjects in a district high school?—I think it is quite as much time as you can afford to give. However, in considering the times allotted you must also consider the amount of correlation. The modern idea is that all these subjects merge into and are correlated to the other—that you teach arithmetic through agriculture, and so on.

21. *Mr. Thomson.*] As a teacher, do you think more value should attach to the power to teach than to the literary qualifications?—I think one is contained in the other. I do not see how you can make a comparison between them.

22. Do you think there should be a vocational course in every secondary school?—Not in every secondary school. I think that a certain percentage of pupils who are going to fill the highest positions in life should have simply a broad secondary education, and should leave out vocational work until after that, but the great majority of our pupils who are not going to the highest positions in life must begin to take vocational work in the secondary course, I think.