

represented on the Board. I think there should be systems of secondary schools throughout the country, consisting of a main central school with several subsidiary schools. I think the latter should receive only junior free-place pupils. I think the main school should be a complete school receiving both senior and junior free-place pupils, and as population increased these subsidiary schools should, I think, grow into main schools. I should like to make a short reference to the waste of effort throughout the Dominion in having small highest classes in many schools. I have heard of a well-endowed secondary school in the South where the number in the Sixth Form consisted of only two pupils, and the most advanced master had to be used to teach these two pupils. I think that is a great waste of effort. I have suggested to my own Board that the new Grammar School should be looked upon as a main school, and that we should have about the Auckland suburban district a number of subsidiary schools. I think, if the Education Board is relieved of technical instruction, that a Technical Board should be formed, to consist of members of the Education Board, members of the Council and Professorial Board of the local University College, and of industrial members. I am in favour of separate Boards, and not of one central Board, because it is to the advantage of the country to have as many of the leading citizens as possible interested in education, and the central Board would thus become too large to be workable. By having power and higher education represented on secondary and technical Boards, there should be no needless competition or overlapping between the several parts of the education system of the Dominion. I would like to say something about vocational schools. I do not approve of the proposal to introduce vocational courses into the secondary schools. Very few boys make up their minds about their future calling until they are about to leave school, and it is well not to hurry them, for frequently they develop quite late in their school career some special aptitude for a particular calling. I am much concerned at the proposal that all our secondary schools should provide courses in agriculture. I have looked into the rural course suggested by the Auckland Education Board and based on the circular from the central Department, and I find that to give a moderate-sized class practical work in these things—in digging, trenching, hoeing, raking, draining, and cultivation of vegetables, treatment of light and heavy soils, succession of crops, study of noxious weeds, the pruning of fruit-trees, the planting of hedges and ornamental trees, and a host of other things—would require all the vacant ground at our present site in Symonds Street as well as the acres recently granted to us at Mount Eden for a new site, and that would be to the exclusion of any share in the ground of all boys not taking part in that particular course. Besides, I am an old gardener, and I have no confidence whatever in the way book-taught teachers of agriculture and horticulture would handle the subject. My opinion of school-gardens is that they are a pleasant hobby for those scholars who are incapable of taking part in school games, but their value to the farming industry is and will remain practically nil; and I think the ground devoted to them would be much better used for fives-courts and other games. Many of our Auckland Grammar School boys are going on the land, and I think that the power to work and think which they have acquired by means of a good general education will be of more service to them in rural life than pottering round plots in the school-yard. I think, if the Government is anxious to further the cause of agriculture and horticulture amongst young people in rural districts, it could do it most economically by means of subsidies to the societies which arrange rural exhibitions, or by offering prizes for fruit, butter, and other products. The idea of school-gardens is not altogether a recent one. It was tried here many years ago by Bishop Selwyn at St. John's College. I looked up the life of Bishop Selwyn and I found he had three classes of students. Under the heading of "Active Employments" the classes were as follows: (1.) Gardeners in the lower school: the duties to be—care of the flower-gardens and apiary, weeding, picking, hand sowing, propagation of choice plants and seeds. (2.) Foresters belonging to the upper school: their duties being—care of the woods and plantations and roading, clearing, road-making, fencing, propagation of choice trees, seasoning timber, &c. (3.) Farmers belonging to the adult school, whose duties related to agriculture in all its branches and the care of stock. This was a delightful vision of Bishop Selwyn's, but it came to nothing. There is one thing I would like to say about nature-study in the primary school. I think it may be introduced very much too early, and I think there is a good deal of injudicious teaching of nature-study. I do not know whether the Commission has heard of the story of a child who staggered his parents by objecting to porridge because the grain scratched the alimentary canal, and who, when he had a cold, said his diaphragm was strained; but I have come across an example of that kind of priggishness in the child of a friend of my own. This composition was written by a Standard II child in this province: "Inside the seed coat or testa of the bean seed are the radicle, the plumule, and the seed-cases. At one end of the hilum or sear there is the micropyle or little gate through which come the root and the shoot. The bean plant belongs to the class of plants called dicotyledons—di, many, and cotyledons, meaning seed leaves." I think that is an example of the tendency to priggishness in a child, or in the teacher. I would like to say a few words on where I think the primary school fails as a preparation for secondary work. I inquire year after year of the boys that come to the Grammar School as to how far they have been exercised in home-work, and I find that most of the schools have no home-work, and that the pupils from the few who do rapidly outclass the others. I think it is deplorable that boys of fifteen should be allowed to waste their evenings as many are doing. They have no idea whatever of doing anything for themselves away from the discipline of the school. Most of them are quite willing to do home-work when they get into the way of it. It takes them a little time at first, and the parents, I think, soon grow interested in the boy's progress in home-work. Many of them I find make a good deal of sacrifice to give a boy a room apart from the rest of the family in which to study undisturbed. That is common in very small homes. I think there would be a marked advance and more general parental interest in education if there was recourse to systematic home-work in the primary schools. I have discussed the matter with several headmasters. They say the classes are so large that it would be impossible to look over the written work; but surely