

you should teach it, but all would be agreed that to teach to the extent to which it used to be taught in the past did not command the respect of or interest the child in any degree. When I mention grammar I represent the extreme position of the old system. There was too much grammar. The same remark applies to what was called "formal arithmetic." Even in our syllabus now, for which I take some responsibility, there are too many rules of arithmetic, and in our schools I believe too much time is given to arithmetic. I am taking arithmetic as a sample subject, because there is less debate about this than about grammar. To some people grammar is a sacred thing that you must not touch, but there are fewer mathematicians in the world, and people can with more impunity throw stones at arithmetic than at grammar; but really the position is exactly the same for the two. In regard to arithmetic, if they were to do hardly any arithmetic but questions that would be absolutely suggested by the practical concerns of life, they could in the process be taught all the principles it is necessary they should know. That is what I hold, and if I had time I should like to tell the Commission my experience in seeing it taught in what I consider one of the best schools in the world—the school attached to the Teachers' College at the Columbia University at New York, where any question that did not arise out of the common daily life was absolutely prohibited; and yet the command of arithmetic possessed by the children in the upper classes there would shame most of the children trained in any school in the British Empire. If we can do that in regard to all our subjects, including reading, we shall have made a great advance in regard to the primary schools. I do not believe in the ordinary miscellaneous reading-book at all. I believe that in teaching children reading you should teach them entirely out of interesting books. I should teach my own children in that way, and I do not see why I should teach other people's children in any other way. The *School Journal* tries to follow that line, but the *School Journal* is, to my mind, only one element among many. I would have a large number of continuous readers, containing continuous stories or continuous descriptions. It is quite a mistake to imagine that children will read only stories. Make a description or narrative interesting, and they will read it. As to the teaching of science, whatever science it is, whether nature-study or physics, the method should be that you use only subjects that can be brought within the child's own experience. That is why so much emphasis is attached to nature-study now, because nature-study properly means study of things that are within or that can be brought within the child's own experience—the study of things at first hand. I think that will be a sufficient indication of what I mean about bringing primary education closer into contact with life. As regards secondary education, I would have vocational courses in every secondary school in New Zealand. Because of the demands of professional examinations, you must keep the general courses in the schools for a certain number of boys and girls. What I mean by professional examinations are those for law, medicine, and the church, because the preliminary examinations for these professions require certain subjects. It is also desirable to keep up these courses for another class of students which is not very numerous, but is still an important class—the class which deals with pure learning, with Latin, Greek, and other foreign literature. It is not desirable we should lose that class, and we have got to teach more than the number in that class in order to secure the full amount of pure learning in the end. I would have, probably in every secondary school in New Zealand, a commerce course. By that I do not mean you should have a course that would turn out expert clerks, but a course in which the subjects were so chosen that the pupils would come to understand the principles on which commerce is based, and have a knowledge of the science and arts with which it principally deals. I should say I would have in every boys' secondary school in New Zealand an agricultural course provided. I would have also what might be called a course of applied science, leading up to engineering and other branches of applied science. In the case of girls I would have domestic science or home science courses. The reason for the agricultural course is partly based on my conception of the importance of agriculture in New Zealand. I hold there is no calling in New Zealand that is anything like so important as agriculture, and I do not think there is any calling that is likely to be so important for a good many years to come; and if we are not going to train up our boys and girls in New Zealand in a knowledge of agriculture, and—what is equally necessary—train them to know the way in which to approach the higher knowledge of agriculture—then we shall be making a fatal mistake. The mistake has gone on long enough now, and the sooner we cure it the better. Another reason I have is this—a negative reason, it is true—that I shall not be doing any harm to the boy or girl who is not going to take up agriculture. Agriculture essentially deals with the prime facts of nature, and therefore you deal with things that every man and woman is interested in, because they are prime facts of nature. That I hold as fundamental. I also hold this: If you want to get a training in science, it does not matter what the specific subject is, provided that the method of teaching is right. It is just as good, for instance, to teach a boy to find the specific gravity of milk, as an example of a liquid, as to teach him to find the specific gravity of sulphuric acid or of alcohol. In the case of milk you are dealing with a thing that the boy sees every day, whereas the first time you introduce sulphuric acid to a boy he does not know what it is, and very likely burns his finger before he knows what it is. What I say is that you can get a training in scientific method from subjects of agricultural knowledge as well as from other subjects. Therefore, you are not doing any injury to a person you train in agriculture, even if he is not going to be an agriculturist. I do not believe in making separate schools for agriculture, commerce, domestic science, and all the other different compartments into which you can divide the training for life. I do not believe in making separate schools—first, because in New Zealand you cannot afford them all. We might be able to afford them in one centre—Auckland—and possibly in the other three larger centres, but we cannot afford them everywhere. In most places we can afford only one school for secondary education. Secondly, you would have so many subjects common to the different courses that if a pupil had to change his course you would have to alter only a small part of his time-table, and not the whole of it. For instance, may I take as an example the course