

112. *Mr. Thomson.*] The High School Boards manage their own land?—Yes, some of them manage them exceedingly well, but all do not.

113. *Mr. Wells.*] Can you suggest any improvement in the system to enable them to get a better return?—I am afraid of anything that looks like pooling reserves.

114. Could not the tenure be improved?—They can all have the same tenure. Any High School Board can come under the clauses of the Public Bodies' Leases Act, and get all the powers given under it.

115. You have no suggestion to make as to how they could get better returns from the reserves?—I say, let them all come under the Public Bodies' Leases Act. Make it compulsory if you like, but you might have to alter some of their special Acts, because if one of those Acts conflicts with the Public Bodies' Leases Act the special Act runs, not the Public Bodies' Leases Act.

116. You told us that the primary and secondary education in New Zealand costs 18s. 8d. per head of population, and in New York £1 1s. 7d. What is your opinion as to the efficiency of our best schools as compared with their best schools?—Our best schools I should not be ashamed of. If you take two or three of their schools, which are model schools, they are better than anything we have.

117. Take the average work?—The good schools of New York are better than ours in some respects, and ours are better than theirs in others. It is very difficult to sum the matter up. Their teaching of English is better than ours, but all good schools in America are ahead of England and of most other countries in the world in the teaching of the mother-tongue.

118. What can you say as to the relative cost of building in brick and in wood?—If you take it per cubic foot, the cost of wood is from 6½d. to 7d., except just around Auckland, as against 9½d. to 10d. for brick. Per square foot of floor-space, if the building is not too high, the cost would be about 11s. 1d. for wood, and 15s. 10d. for brick. You have to add a little more for the cost of the desks and furniture. In Auckland, according to recent tendering, the cost of building is much higher.

119. Bearing in mind the extra cost of upkeep and sinking fund in the case of a wooden building, is it cheaper at present prices to build in brick?—In most places it is. Long before a wooden building is worn out it will have eaten itself out in the cost of maintenance. There are other considerations that enter into the matter besides the question of cost. It is better to build a temporary school in wood than in brick. Some people are afraid of earthquakes, but that matter would not alarm me. The fact that by building in brick you are guarding against fire far better than you can in the case of a wooden building far outweighs any danger from earthquakes. That danger is greatly exaggerated.

120. Are you prepared to advocate the inspection of all private schools?—They are subject to inspection now if the proprietors like to make them so.

121. The Act says that the head teacher of such a school "may" apply for inspection?—But look at the definition of "efficient instruction" in the Act. Section 150, subsection (5), says, "For the purposes of this section, 'efficient instruction' means such instruction as is prescribed by regulations, and, on and after the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and eleven, means efficient instruction as prescribed by regulations and given to children in their own homes or in a school subject to inspection under this Act." Then section 170, subsection (3), says, "A school inspected in accordance with this section shall thereupon be held to be a school subject to inspection under this Act." The teacher asks for inspection, and the Board must inspect it. That is the only way in which a school can become "a school subject to inspection." If it does not become a school subject to inspection the instruction given at it is not considered efficient. That is the way in which the law compels a school to be subject to inspection.

122. Is that the actual force of it?—That is my reading of it.

123. *The Chairman.*] What was the intention?—The intention was to make it compulsory.

124. Is the effect to do that?—I think so.

125. Then, until the managers of a private school apply you are powerless to interfere?—Yes. It is not a school "subject to inspection," and therefore the education given at it is not efficient, and you can prosecute the parents of any children who attend it. There should be inspection of the buildings also.

126. Is there any power in the Act to compel efficient teaching in such a school?—The Act says "such instruction as is required by the regulations." It depends upon the Inspectors' opinion as to whether there is such instruction.

127. *Mr. Wells.*] I believe that in one of the Australian States every person engaged in education must have a certificate of efficiency: would you advocate that system for New Zealand?—It is only a back door out of it if you register practically every teacher. They do not have to be certificated teachers.

128. Do you not think that every one engaged in teaching should pass some test, and hold some certificate?—That is all very well theoretically, but in that case how are you going to get enough teachers for your schools?

129. Those who are engaged in primary schools are under the eye of the Inspectors. There is some guarantee that efficient teaching is going on?—These are also under the eye of the Inspectors.

130. *The Chairman.*] When you get the declaration of the Inspector, what power have you to get the instruction in the schools made efficient?—That is a matter of the powers of the Boards.

131. *Mr. Wells.*] You suggested that the Education Boards should have general control of the primary, secondary, and technical education in their respective districts: would you include Native schools also?—The Boards are not in too much of a hurry to take Native schools over.

132. Can you tell us how the cost of Native schools compares with the cost of those under the Boards?—You would have to compare them with schools in very scattered districts. There are none within reach of the other schools. I will take out the figures if you desire it. We are not