

training college as they are in an ordinary public school. The student in the training college is working under what I may call more or less artificial conditions. His classes are small; he is not asked to control a large number of pupils as teachers in the public schools are. He is working constantly under the eye of the class teacher, and hence the necessity for discipline or control is not needed to the same extent as it is if he were working in a public school. So for these reasons I do not think that the kind of experience he gets from that point of view is to be compared with that which he would derive by going through a course of training in a public school, and it is for these reasons that I think the idea of appointing probationers to public schools such an excellent one. The probationer is not asked to do much teaching. He has to give instruction during the first two years, and at the end of that time he is in a condition to profit greatly by the instruction and training he receives in the training college.

4. Do you mean all these schools associated with the training college?—No. Probationers are appointed to schools of various grades for two years, and if they qualify they are admitted to the training college. Here is another matter. The Inspector-General, in his evidence in Wellington, rightly laid a great deal of stress on the teaching of agriculture in our schools; but are we doing sufficient in the matter of preparing our teachers to give this instruction? I am referring now to the training college. I am not at all sure in my own mind whether we should not do a little more in the matter of providing suitable courses for teachers whilst going through the training colleges. I may be told the Boards of Education in various districts should do that, but I think myself this training in agriculture is a matter of such importance that it would be better to some extent to make it compulsory so far as the Training College Regulations are concerned. If it is compulsory, more should be done in the way of making the training practical. What I mean is this: Take our own training college. In this training college students are instructed in agriculture, but there is no plot of ground in connection with the training college sufficiently large to enable the practical work that is needed in agriculture to be profitably carried on. I think that is a matter that should be insisted on. How far the Department is going to insist upon it I do not know. I do know that last year the Department pointed out to the Board that there was no such plot of ground, and that the Board endeavoured to get a plot of ground, but as a matter of fact no plot of ground so far has been secured. I think, moreover, it would be a wise thing to endeavour to make some provision whereby students in the training college could be enabled to attend the Lincoln College or some similar institution. There is no reason why female students in the training colleges should not be granted facilities, if they wish, for taking up a course of domestic science such as may be obtained in the Otago University. If a certain number of scholarships were set apart for deserving students each year, at any rate a few of our students would receive this thorough grounding in practical agriculture, which I consider necessary if we are to do justice to the subject. Another matter is this: Our head teachers are required from year to year to hold a certain number of examinations from period to period. They are required to map out schemes of instruction, and during the course of the year to hold not less than three periodical examinations. Now, the head teacher of a large school has an immense amount of clerical work to do. If he conscientiously carries out the instructions and examines the school it takes him a long time to do it. I do not myself see that there is a great deal to be gained by this constant examination of the children by the head teacher, and so I think it would be a wise thing to do away with one of these periodical examinations. I would not do away with them all, because the public must have some safeguard that the work of the school is being efficiently carried on; but I certainly think that two would be quite enough. I went away this morning just as the Inspector-General was beginning to talk about compulsory attendance, and I followed with a good deal of interest the remarks of the previous witness. We are beginning in Auckland to seriously consider the question of compulsory attendance so far as private schools are concerned. We intend, I hope, to apply the compulsory clauses to the private schools. There is one thing I do not think was brought out this morning, and it is this: A portion of section 151 of the Education Act reads as follows: "Head teachers of private schools may apply to and receive from the Chairman or Secretary of the Board a general certificate of exemption," &c. I think that word "may" should be "must" or "shall," and I will tell you why. You may say to me we are able to get at these schools and insist on their coming in. That is quite true if we know of them; but it is quite possible in a town as large as Auckland for a private school to exist without the education authorities knowing about it. I have lately found out about several small private schools which I really knew nothing about before. Now, I think that if the word "shall" was substituted for "may" the effect would be that every private school would have to register. They would come out into the open, and the Boards of Education would be given a chance to find out whether they were efficiently taught, and whether the attendance was regular. It would be a very simple alteration in the Act. Here is another small matter, but it is of small matters, after all, that our Education Act and regulations are made up. We are paying to our pupil-teachers £25 a year in the first year, leaving out boarding-allowance; for the second year, £35; for the third year, £45; and for the fourth year, £55. The probationers in the first year get £20 and in the second year £25 a year. If a boy matriculates he ranks as a third-year pupil-teacher, and he goes into a public school, and remains there for two years, and at the end of that time he enters the training college. During these two years he gets for the first two years £45, and for the second year £55—that is to say, he gets £100 for the two years. If he becomes a probationer he gets £20 for the first year, and £25 for the second—that is to say, £45 for the two years. The consequence is that applicants invariably choose to become pupil-teachers because they get a great deal more money. Would it not be a simple matter to arrange it in this way? Suppose a probationer has passed his Matriculation Examination, why not give him the salary of a third-year pupil-teacher? I would place him on an equality with a pupil-teacher who has matriculated. If, on the other hand, he has passed the