

45. Is it not because they may not have had the necessary preparation for it in the lower standards—that there has not been a gradual working-up to the higher branch of mathematical geography?—That may be. I cannot answer that definitely.

46. *The Chairman.*] Is your experience of the Standard V pupil sufficient to enable you to say that when he comes to Standard VI he is sufficiently grounded in the requirements of English, geography, grammar, and arithmetic to enable him to do justice to it?—I think, on the whole, I may say Yes to that.

47. *Mr. Poland.*] Is it not a two years' course?—Nominally it may be taught in Standards V and VI. Practically it is taught in Standard VI.

48. *Mr. Kirk.*] Is it not necessary that a boy turned out of school at fourteen should have this knowledge?—No. I think it might very well be left to the secondary course.

49. *Mr. Poland.*] In what respect do you suggest that the arithmetic teaching should be curtailed?—For example, the teaching of compound interest in Standard VI might be omitted. The more difficult portions of compound proportion might be omitted. Many of the questions that are put might be simplified even if the subject itself were left. Decimal fractions might fairly be left, but the requirements in decimal fractions might be lessened in the matter of examination.

50. You suggest that the course of instruction in arithmetic should be of a more practical nature than at present. You think that the omission of these subjects would have that effect?—Yes. Take the one example I have given of compound interest. That does not enter into the experience of most men, and might well be omitted. I may say that we do not complain very urgently that the syllabus in regard to arithmetic is very far from having a bearing on practical work. On the contrary, a great deal of it has, but if it can be made more practical we should like to see it done, and certainly it ought to be lessened in the total amount.

51. Parents have complained to me very often that a child leaving school after passing the Sixth Standard, and obtaining a certificate of proficiency, may be asked by his father to work out some simple arithmetical problem, and he knows nothing about it. Surely a child leaving school after passing the Sixth Standard should be able to do work of that nature?—One point on which all teachers that I know are agreed upon is that whatever is struck out, the one thing that is wanted and that we do not get is mechanical accuracy from the lowest standard to the highest. I should be very glad to see certain things struck out of the arithmetic syllabus in the upper standards, provided that we could in their place get mechanical accuracy.

52. *The Chairman.*] Would the striking-out of these things give time to ensure accuracy?—It would.

53. *Mr. Poland.*] Would it not give more time for the rural course, botany and zoology?—Mechanical accuracy in arithmetic is extremely desirable, and it should not be sacrificed to anything.

54. About how many hours are provided for arithmetic in the upper classes?—Five hours a week, as a usual thing. In Standards III, IV, and VI, five hours should be sufficient to teach them from this syllabus. In Standard V, if you want to cover the whole of the ground, you should give about seven hours to arithmetic to comply with the present syllabus.

55. Do you give Standards V and VI home work in arithmetic?—Not usually.

56. In any subjects?—Yes. The subjects usually given are such matters as preparation of reading and spelling for the next day, but very little written work.

57. *The Chairman.*] Ought there, under any conditions, to be any necessity for giving children home work in arithmetic?—I think not.

58. Why in arithmetic more than any other subject?—Because arithmetic ought to be done in school, whereas if you want a child to understand the reading-lesson you might fairly ask him to read it over the night before.

59. You do not think that the teaching of the principles of simple interest in school would be of advantage, and that the child should have a little practice in it at home?—I would prefer that he should have his practice in school. At home he can get his elder brother to work it for him. At school he must do the work himself or leave it undone.

60. *Mr. Thomson.*] The Institute are in favour of the centralization of small country schools. I suppose you are aware that amongst country residents the proposition is not favoured?—I believe that there is some opposition.

61. I gather from the remit that you would make it mandatory?—Yes; I do not see how it can be of any value unless it were made mandatory.

62. Recognizing that there is opposition, do you not think we should work along optional lines—that the School Committees of the districts affected should have power to vote on the question amongst themselves? Would not that be more in harmony with public opinion, and preferable to making it mandatory?—I am afraid I could not say Yes to that. I should prefer to make it mandatory.

63. Do you not think that centralization could be carried out in some of our cities or towns? Do you know any town in the Auckland District where there are a number of schools some of which could be abolished and the children sent to a central school without impairing the efficiency of the instruction imparted?—At present I am not able to think of any such case.

64. At any rate, if centralization is good for the country it is also good for the cities, if it would save expense and improve the instruction imparted?—Quite so; with this difference: that in or near the cities you seldom have small schools which it would be advisable to close.

65. With respect to the question of putting all the Inspectors of the Dominion under a Central Department, can you say whether the Auckland Inspectors have signified their approval of that particular remit from the Conference?—No. They have had no opportunity of doing anything of the sort.