

66. I notice the Institute is of opinion that the cost of education should be provided for by general taxation, and that no portion should be raised by local rating. What is the principal reason for that proposal?—The only reason we have is this: that if a portion of the cost of education is to be thrown on local rates it would often happen that in scattered country districts, where the standard of education of the inhabitants is not high, and where a large amount of money is needed for roads and other works, the local rating would be stinted by comparison with more densely peopled districts of the Dominion.

67. What is your experience as a teacher with regard to the free school-books?—The experience generally of teachers is that the books provided are certainly of use in the schools, and are generally and fully used in the schools, but there is the drawback that those books cannot be taken home to be made use of at home. On the whole, the teachers would have preferred to see that money given for the purchase of school stationery, leaving the parents to buy the books that could and ought to be taken home.

68. *Mr. Wells.*] You mean the principal reader? That would not apply to the continuous readers that are supplied?—No. The continuous readers might very well be dealt with as they are now.

69. Do you consider that the syllabus generally is overloaded?—That is a very large question. If the syllabus is to be taken as I believe it was intended to be taken, as to a very large extent optional, and selections are to be made from it, I think the teachers I represent very strongly approve of the syllabus as a very marked improvement on the old one. The only objection to it is that occasionally we have found ourselves required by an Inspector to teach a large section without being able to make selections from that section.

70. But does that hold in this district?—No.

71. *Mr. Thomson.*] I would like details of that scheme. You say you make selections. Will you give us an illustration?—The best example I can give is on pages 30, 31, and 32 of the syllabus. In the middle of page 32 you have Course B in geography. There is no misunderstanding about that now, but there was at one time, and there may be still in some districts. Course B in geography on these pages contains a very long and very valuable list of subjects for the teaching of geography. If teachers are allowed to select what they please from that list, they have a very large amount of material from which to select. If they are required to teach all, they cannot do it. If they are required to teach an unduly large amount of it, the work becomes very difficult.

72. Are they required to teach too much of it?—In this district we are not. We are required practically to teach what we think sufficient.

73. Does that remark apply to other portions of the syllabus as well as to geography?—To some, but not to all.

74. *The Chairman.*] Will you specify the portions to which it does apply?—It would be more easy to specify the portions to which it does not. For example, portion of pages 20, 22, and 23. Here you have the requirements in arithmetic. On page 23 you have the Standard IV arithmetic. We are required to teach the whole of that paragraph. We do not object to it, but we have no choice; we may object or not, but the scholars are required to know that work.

75. *Mr. Thomson.*] Do you think a teacher should be allowed to exercise a choice in that subject?—No, I do not.

76. Do you think that that could be improved?—It might be improved chiefly in the way of curtailment.

77. By that, then, you admit that the syllabus is overloaded?—I do.

78. And if overloaded there it may be overloaded also in other parts?—I maintain that the arithmetic course as a whole is overloaded, not that the arithmetic course in Standard IV is overloaded.

79. Do you think it is a fact, as a result of the teaching in our primary schools, "that in a few short years after the admission of a bright, imaginative, and talkative child into the school he is converted into the irresponsible and circumscribed schoolboy we have to-day"?—I think that that is a very wild statement.

80. In regard to the study of mathematical geography, you believe it is beyond the comprehension of the child?—Beyond the comprehension of the average child.

81. Do you think it is possible to teach that subject by means of pictures?—No.

82. Not by a movable picture?—No. It would be distinctly better than a stationary picture, and the orrery itself would be distinctly better than a moving picture.

83. In giving evidence you said that it would be beyond the reasoning-powers of a child to understand the meaning of an axis?—Beyond the power of the bulk of the children attending the school.

84. That is the reason why you would eliminate that from the syllabus?—Yes.

85. As a practical teacher, do you think that instruction could be comprehended by the children by means of a movable picture?—It could be given and could be comprehended even without the aid of a movable picture; but we maintain that the effort on the part of the children is very great and very continuous before they understand that. It has to be repeated again and again and explained by all sorts of devices, and that finally you can get the children to answer these questions at the end of the year as if they understood them, and the answers in many of the cases are learned by heart simply because they have to be learned in some way. Now, we think that is not a satisfactory method of spending school time, and we should prefer to have a subject which demands so much abstract thinking eliminated from the syllabus altogether.

86. Do you think the movable picture could be made an adjunct to the school?—To a very moderate extent. I have not very much faith in the movable picture, owing to the difficulties surrounding the production of these movable pictures. If a movable picture could be placed