

into a problem. In Standards III and IV not more than two principles should be introduced. (i.) That the necessary apparatus to teach this subject—sets of accurate weights, measures, &c.—should be supplied by the Department to each school, so that the subject may be taught practically.” In Geography this is the finding: “(a.) That, although the A and B courses are equally compulsory in the present arrangement of geography, whereby the B course may be treated in eighty hours, while the extent of the A course demands a very much greater allotment of time, there is a comparative neglect of political geography, and an undue emphasis of the mathematical and physical, and the subject generally, especially in the upper standards, is receiving too large a share of the school time. (b.) The Institute therefore suggests—(1) That there be only one course in geography, comprising all necessary topics; (2) that the teacher is required to draw up his scheme of work from these topics; (3) that sixty hours per year in the classes Standard III to Standard VI be suggested as sufficient time for this subject.” That is, an hour and a half per week throughout these standards. The Institute also suggests that geography should be removed from the list of compulsory subjects from the Standard VI proficiency examination so far as the individual pass is concerned. The object of this is, of course, to give the teacher freedom of choice in the examination as set in Wellington or in the Board’s office on the subject. Of course, the teacher’s right of choice is interfered with. As to the subject of history, we think this should receive more attention. This is the suggestion: “That the subjects in history should be systematically grouped and arranged, and a concentric series of historical readers should be used”—of course, in addition to proper oral lessons on the subject. We do not advocate teaching history from books only. We think the use of books should follow on the giving of oral lessons by the teacher. As to the subject of drawing, girls taking a class in manual training need not be taught geometrical drawing, but they have to take it for scholarship examinations, and we recommend that geometrical drawing should not be required either to be taught to them, nor should they be examined in it. In this district our girls are handicapped fifty marks because they are not, as a rule, taught geometrical drawing in the schools on account of their going to the manual-training school. There is a suggestion about sewing. I am not an expert on the subject, and I leave that to the ladies to deal with. Finally, we suggest that the Department periodically issue a pamphlet similar to the suggestions for teachers issued by the English Board of Education on the general scope of the syllabus. In connection with that I might explain that we look upon the syllabus not as a fixed quantity at all, but as a sort of organism which must steadily grow, and that when the Department thinks that additions or alterations or omissions should be made they should issue this pamphlet, explaining the position, and also giving the teachers the latest ideas on the teaching of the various subjects. Now, physical training is a subject which has not at all received the attention it deserves in many of our schools in the past. I think this is a most essential subject, and that very great emphasis should be laid upon it. In this connection I should like to point out that the lessons in drill given to cadets seem to be unduly long. The boys have to drill for an hour at a time, and this is a violation of the principles of physical training. The modern idea is to have boys for a few minutes every day. I should compare the present system of giving an hour a week and having none in between to very like giving a boy a dinner once a week and letting him starve the rest of the time. The teaching of hygiene and the laws of health I think might be emphasized somewhat more, and in connection with that a resolution was passed at the annual meeting of the Institute in favour of teaching sexual physiology in the schools, both to boys and girls, but not by the teachers. The vote was absolutely unanimous on that point.

9. *The Chairman.*] Up to what standard?—Not until they were approaching the age of puberty. It would not do to teach these things too early, and of course the teaching would need to be done by experts who would handle the subject in a very tactful way. There was a general feeling that a very great deal of sexual immorality was the result of ignorance rather than of vice in the early stages, and that this could be corrected by proper instruction at the right time. In connection with physical training, the question of better play-grounds arises. The present condition of many of our large schools is an absolute scandal in this respect. There is one large school in Auckland not a mile from where we are now sitting where the children actually play in the streets; that is the play-ground for a great number of them.

10. The only play-ground?—They have a sort of play-ground about as big as an ordinary back yard, and so they have to play in the streets, and I think they drill there, too, although I would not be sure of that. The question of furniture is also inseparably connected with physical training. It is a well-recognized fact that if a child sits in a desk which is too low or too high he is subject to physical troubles. Adjustable desks are now obtainable. They are expensive, of course; that is a matter of pounds shillings and pence. Still, it is a vital question. If schools were provided with adjustable desks of the best pattern it would have a very great effect on the children. There are a couple of points I have not consulted my association about, so I had better leave them for the present. They are the question of domestic science and the extension of wood-work in our schools. I would like to give a personal statement on that subject. Some of the time saved in the reduction of work in arithmetic could well be used in reading, and especially reading of continuous matter—that is, standard authors suited to the age of the child. Teaching a certain quantity of knowledge should be discouraged in every way. This is largely a matter for the Inspectors, but there is often a tendency to try and get through a certain amount of work and get through it whether it is well taught or ill taught—whether properly assimilated or not. That should be discouraged in every possible way. That is connected with the question of examinations. It is a very difficult thing to get assistant teachers to believe that their future does not depend on examination-passes. If they could be persuaded that their promotion does not depend upon cramming in a certain quantity of knowledge in a given time this thing would go; but we cannot get rid of it until we get rid of very much of our examination work. In connection with the classification of children, it is advisable not merely to have standard classes, but to have these