

17. You will notice that very great emphasis has been placed upon phonics and voice-production: what is your opinion upon that?—I quite agree with it. As a matter of fact, in my school we teach reading by means of phonics. It is a system that should be insisted upon in every school.

18. Do you not find that there are great differences between the children in any class from Standard I-upwards in regard to reading, some reading with the greatest ease from a book when it is first placed in their hands? Do you not think it desirable that at least one period a week, and probably two, should be devoted to silent reading by those children who are very proficient?—I think more than once or twice a week. My instructions to my teachers are that those pupils whom we know to be capable of carrying out that work satisfactorily are to be given every possible opportunity of reading silently. That sets the teacher free to devote his attention to those who require help. I have practised that for years, and I am well satisfied with the result.

19. What arrangements have you made in the direction of supplying school libraries?—We have a library of 1,700 books, in seven divisions, one for the infant department and one for each standard class, specially selected to meet the requirements of the class, as far as we could get it. Each teacher is in charge of the books belonging to his own room.

20. *Mr. Poland.*] Do you consider that the four Boards of Education that you consider would be sufficient for New Zealand should be elected on the electoral franchise?—Yes.

21. You do not quite agree with the recommendation of the Teachers' Institute that all payments for the cost of education should be made out of the general taxation. You say there should be a liberal subsidy upon local contributions. I suppose you mean contributions for the improvement of schoolgrounds?—I think all contributions should be voluntary. I am at one with the Institute on that point. The Institute objects to compulsory local taxation for educational purposes.

22. The subsidy is merely to encourage voluntary contributions?—As a matter of fact, under the Manual and Technical Schools Act Borough Councils are empowered to levy taxes for technical education. At Whangarei, where I had charge of the technical school, both the Borough Council and the County Council contributed towards the cost of the technical classes. They were allowed by law, though it was not compulsory.

23. *The Chairman.*] Are these the grants that you consider should be supplemented by the State?—I am speaking now specially of voluntary contributions, such as we had at Mount Eden lately.

24. What was it called?—Improvement of the schoolgrounds. We have now £210 available for it, and we have a landscape gardener directing the work. In the course of a few years we hope to have the place laid out almost as a park as regards the portion that can be spared for playground purposes.

25. *Mr. Poland.*] You spoke of the scandalous conditions obtaining at some of the Auckland city schools with regard to play-grounds: how would you overcome a difficulty such as that at Newton East?—I am afraid the only plan is to dip pretty deeply into the public purse, and buy up some of the surrounding shanties, and pull them down. In Auckland we have no municipal trams.

26. We have left the play-ground question too late?—Yes. It is a matter of very great expense, but the thing is worth while. The production of citizens is more important than any other kind of production, and I think the public ought to face it rather than allow children to grow up in such insanitary surroundings.

27. You cannot suggest any way of purchasing land?—If it were near the railway, or we had municipal trams, the children might be moved out, but that is not practicable in Auckland.

28. Are the free school-books a success, in your opinion?—They are a qualified success. When the grant was first given it was not wanted; at least, that is my experience.

29. *The Chairman.*] Do you mean that it was not asked for?—It was neither asked for nor really wanted by the parents in my district, but since so many continuous readers have been supplied, that portion of it is a success. In my own school nearly every child has bought a principal reader in addition to the one supplied by the Department, so that the free book is practically wasted. The children use one book at home and the other at school.

30. Would it be wasted if it could be taken home?—It might be wasted by being lost. Objection is raised by some parents to their children inheriting a dirty book from some one else's children. Some of them have bought arithmetic-books rather than allow the children to use second-hand books.

31. *Mr. Kirk.*] Speaking of the standard libraries, do you find that the children make use of the opportunities provided?—Yes; they use them very freely.

32. And you can speak well of the introduction of such standard libraries as far as other schools are concerned?—Yes. I would recommend them strongly to any school.

33. Is there any danger of these standard books becoming a source of danger, just as the free school-books are or may be?—Not more so than the books in a public library of any other kind. I have never had occasion to suspect the spread of disease from school-books.

34. Do you find that the children handle the books with care, as an elderly person would?—Yes; if they do not they are fined 1d., and they may have to replace the book if it is seriously damaged.

35. From the teachers' point of view, if the charge of a secondary school were placed under the control of the Education Board, would you still be in favour of the retention of the High School Governors?—They might take the position of a School Committee. I think it is advisable to have local control in that way—that of people who would take an interest in the building and such matters, in the same way that a School Committee does. I think the functions of the Committee are very important, so long as they are not allowed to appoint teachers.