

to maintain themselves more comfortably. I think the problem ought to be solved in some other way. However, I will not touch further upon the political side of the question. The point of the argument is this: You would not make the town parents sacrifice more than the country parents if you paid merely the cost of maintenance of the child from the country. That is one reason why I should not make the allowance for maintenance too high. At the same time, you should make it high enough to prevent poor country parents having to find hard cash to pay for the maintenance of the child in town. He will already have to find more in clothes and in other ways apart from mere maintenance, and I do not think the conditions are so unequal that you should not pay the full cost of maintenance. I put the amount at £40, because that is the lowest amount that any secondary boarding-school, so far as I am aware, charges for board. I do not think it is desirable that country children should go to unlicensed boardinghouses, where they have no opportunity for evening work, and no proper supervision. They should go either to houses attached to the school, or houses licensed and preferably under the supervision of a teacher. Therefore you would have to pay a sufficiently high allowance to make it worth while for the high-school authorities or some other proper person to carry on such hostels or boardinghouses. That is the suggestion I would like to see carried out.

48. *Mr. Kirk.*] Would you differentiate between country children with respect to the financial standing of their parents?—No; I do not believe in "poverty scholarships." On that point I feel very strongly. I have had a good deal to do with poverty scholarships in the Old Country. For one thing, it is very difficult to arrive at an exact estimate of the financial position of the parents. There are so many people who take a liberal view of their own impecuniosity—who consider that they have less than a certain income when they have advantages that would really bring them into the same financial position as others. It is difficult to take account of the size of the family. It is difficult to take account of the many financial responsibilities which are hard to put down on paper; it is extremely difficult to run a "poverty clause" scholarships scheme satisfactorily.

48A. Would you be in favour of granting a wealthy man in the country a scholarship of £40 a year in respect to his child—placing him on the same footing as the poor man?—Yes, but the proportion of children of wealthy people who get scholarships is extremely small, and under a qualifying scholarship system it would be smaller still, because some of them now get an advantage in being coached. Under the qualifying scholarships system it would not pay to coach. I hold that under a proper system of taxation, which I presume we must assume to exist, the rich would have to pay in another way.

49. In Wellington you spoke of the teaching of arithmetic and grammar especially. As head of the Education Department have you made any representation to Ministers with a view to having the defects you spoke of removed?—The syllabus has been under review for some time past. It has been discussed by the Inspectors' Conference and by the Educational Institute. I do not like to plead guilty to lapse of duty, because I do not feel guilty; the matter has been crowded out by other things. What the Inspectors and teachers ask for is very little alteration in the syllabus, but a rearrangement to make the work more definite.

50. What do you propose by way of remedying the defects complained of?—There are certain things that I would cut out of the arithmetic. I think there are too many rules taught. In the last revision of the syllabus I would have made the alteration if I could have been sure of the support of the Inspectors and teachers. I did go as far as I thought the people were prepared for. They are all prepared to go further now, and I am prepared to go on with it, and get out the proposals in the course of a few months. Copies would then be sent to the Education Boards, the Inspectors, and the Educational Institute for their remarks. On the return of their replies, if there were any serious differences we should try to arrive at a compromise.

51. As we have to report on the subject, would you give us your views—especially your views as to how the defects in the teaching of grammar and arithmetic could be removed?—It is easier to speak as to arithmetic than as to grammar. Standard V is the first place where I would make an alteration. I would still further simplify the requirements as to vulgar fractions. I would still further restrict the percentage subjects—interest, insurance, and so forth—if not cut them out altogether from Standard V. Still more would I simplify those same things in Standard VI. I would cut out troy weight. I would not insist that the pupils should know the meaning of ratio, though they ought to be able to use it, recognizing that the abstract idea is distinctly one that comes more naturally in the secondary period—the period of adolescence. Then the cards issued by the Department might be considerably reduced in difficulty. Those are the principal things I can point out at present.

52. Would you substitute anything else for those things, or simply eliminate them?—I would not substitute anything else. I would make the arithmetic sound on a few basal principles. What I want the pupils to do is to be able to apply the principles to simple cases.

53. Are you satisfied that the present syllabus gives a reasonable guarantee that the pupil is being turned out trained to use his brains?—I do not think any syllabus can give a guarantee. I do not think the syllabus is the most important thing. The most important thing is the teacher.

54. But the syllabus is laid down. If you depended upon the teacher solely you would require no syllabus?—I should like to have such good teachers that we should need no syllabus beyond a very general indication of the work to be done. I should like to be able to put the whole syllabus on four pages.

55. Have you any recommendation as to that?—I do not think we should be quite prepared for that. Our best teachers are quite prepared, but we have many teachers who have not the experience or the skill that would enable us to leave them so largely unguided.

56. Assuming that the teachers had a freer hand, how would the question of examinations be affected?—I think the less importance we attach to examinations the better, so long as we have