

to be adaptable to circumstances?—There are great difficulties in the matter of importing teachers. It is a matter that I have thought about a good deal in the last year or so, because of our shortage here. First of all, the shortage of teachers is in no way connected with our larger schools. We can get plenty of teachers to come to our larger schools, or to take up positions within reach of the towns, and if we got young people from Home we would have to send them to the back districts. That is where the teaching service is short of men and women. I feel, first of all, that we do not know much about these young people, and that when they got out here they would be disappointed if they could not get a school near the towns. We constantly have teachers coming out here from Home and applying for employment, and almost without exception they refuse to go away from the towns.

52. Can you tell us whether the Auckland Board has experienced any difficulty in getting grants for buildings in the backblocks: has there been any delay?—I really cannot say.

53. Can you tell us anything in regard to help in growing schools. Do you think it is given soon enough?—No, I do not think it is. I know it is a difficult question, but I think, myself, that if a school is growing, and rising from one grade to another, and if the Inspector is satisfied that the increase will be permanent, then the addition to the staff should be made then and there on his recommendation.

54. Have you thought at all about the centralization of rural schools, and whether it would be practicable to any extent in this district?—Yes, I think it would be practicable. For instance, in the Waikato and other districts, where the roads are good, there is no reason at all why the children should not be brought in to a centre.

55. What is your opinion about the efficiency that would result?—I think the efficiency could not possibly fail to increase, and on the score of economy I believe the country would gain.

56. With regard to examinations, do you think it would be possible to have what is called the accrediting system, by which the pupil is allowed to go on on the certificate of the head teacher without submitting to examination?—Yes, I do.

57. In other words, you would cast upon the headmaster the responsibility of certifying whether an individual pupil was fit to go on?—Yes.

58. That would be a privilege I suppose you would not give to all schools?—That is so, and a privilege that at any time might be withdrawn.

59. I think you said you were prepared to advocate the abolition of the visit with notice?—I did not make any distinction between the two at all, but I would like the clause to be altered in such a way that it would not be necessary for an Inspector to visit a school twice a year.

60. *Mr. Kirk.*] You are doubtless acquainted with the system of arithmetic adopted in the Horace Mann School, in New York?—Only in a general way.

61. Is that the system of teaching arithmetic you would like to see adopted here? Is that what you meant when you spoke of practical-arithmetic teaching?—Not altogether. I think we might alter our arithmetic syllabus in the direction of shortening the syllabus, and grading it better.

62. Do you know whether the school-books for the respective standards now used in Auckland are the same as those used in Otago or Canterbury or Wellington? Are there universal school-books?—No; the books used vary from district to district, but one of these arithmetic-books is used pretty well all over New Zealand.

63. Is it desirable there should be a universal set of books?—I am a strong believer in allowing the teachers to select what they like themselves.

64. There is the objection that has been raised by parents who are living just over the border from one district to another, that if they have to shift their children have straight away to get another set of books. Do you think that objection does not override the general statement you make?—No, because that would not very often happen, and the number of books they would have to replace would not be very many. Still, that is an objection.

65. Can school life be improved by a furtherance of the library principle?—Oh, yes.

66. Would you be in favour of the introduction of general school libraries in connection with the classes?—Of course, a good deal of that has been done in this and other districts. There are libraries not only connected with the schools, but libraries connected with each class-room, which is, of course, the proper thing. That is in answer to the question of libraries connected with a particular school. There is another and wider question of libraries to which a number of schools would have access.

67. There are such libraries in some of your schools?—Yes.

68. Speaking from your experience, can you say if any good results have come from such libraries?—Of course, it is very hard to gauge such results, because they do not declare themselves for years; but we know in many cases that these libraries are largely taken advantage of by the pupils, and we can presume that the books they are reading are of service to them.

69. The children are really making use of the libraries?—Undoubtedly.

70. To a great extent?—To a large extent. I have heard one or two teachers state that now and then the interest in the libraries begins to wane, and what is done in these circumstances is that the teacher will close up the library for a month or two, with the result that the interest comes back again.

71. Is there any matter that has come under your knowledge whereby the administration of the Act by the Education Board in your district may be improved, or where the Act might be administered more sympathetically so far as you, or the schools, or the School Committees are concerned?—I really cannot think of anything further than the matters I have brought forward already.

72. *Mr. Poland.*] Do I understand you to say that, in your opinion, rather much time is given to the teaching of arithmetic by the regulation?—I implied that. Of course, if you make the syllabus difficult, there is a good deal to be taught, and excellent though it is, it means that a good deal of time must be taken up to satisfy the Inspectors at the examinations.