

73. Arithmetic is a compulsory subject now for most of the examinations—the Sixth Standard proficiency, the Junior and Senior Civil Service Examinations, and the Matriculation also?—Yes.

74. Do you think that a simplification of the syllabus and a reduction of the time devoted to arithmetic is going to enable pupils to pass examinations without that being a compulsory subject, or would you be in favour of doing away with the compulsory nature of arithmetic?—I would be in favour of simplyfying the syllabus, and not forcing candidates to spend the same amount of time in preparing for it.

75. What would you give that time to?—To English or science.

76. Would you mind giving us your views in regard to rural courses for schools, and the syllabus proposed by the Department?—The rural course for schools applies to the work that is done in district high schools, and it was formulated with the object of giving the work done in these schools a more intimate connection with that which a boy or girl will immediately take up after leaving the school. So far as I know of the course, and I know of its operation in two districts, it has been of very great value to the pupils. I may say that the introduction of this course—not here, because the ground was partly broken before I came, but in the district from which I came—was opposed by teachers, and I understand that in other districts it is opposed by teachers who like the old course, which led up to the Junior Civil Service Examination. I cannot think this rural course is a good course for enabling students to take a high place on the examination list, but I think it is an excellent course for preparing them for the work they take up immediately after leaving school.

77. Do you think, because a child is going to a district high school in the country, that necessarily his future profession will be in connection with agriculture?—No, I do not.

78. Then, the rural course as laid down seems to cause a good deal of the time of a child to be devoted to subjects that will be of no advantage to him at the examination for which he must sit, say, for the Junior or Senior Civil Service or Matriculation, and therefore do you not think the child is handicapped in passing these examinations?—Yes. In some districts, notably the Wanganui District, there are two courses which run side by side in the district high school, one having matriculation and the other rural courses. The Board reserves to itself the right of saying what pupils shall take up the Matriculation course—it will not allow the pupil to decide that—and some modification of that might very well be adopted.

79. Do you think if a child passes the Sixth Standard proficiency in the time specified in the Act that the Board should usurp the right of saying that that child shall proceed at that district high school to qualify for the Matriculation Examination?—I do not. I think some modification of that plan would be excellent.

80. A boy on leaving a primary school with a proficiency certificate and presenting himself at a district high school can, under the proposed course, either take agriculture or chemistry or a commercial course or a rural course?—That depends on the teacher at the high school, and it depends on the course of instruction given at the high school. There are district high schools in this district where there is no rural course given, and a boy could not get it there. I suppose what you want to get at it this: should a child going to a district high school be compelled to take a rural course?

81. What I want to get at is this: do you think that the rural course, which is made compulsory practically in the district high school, debars or handicaps a child who wishes to qualify for either a Junior or Senior Civil Service or Matriculation Examination as compared with a child in a city school?—Undoubtedly I do. I consider a boy going to a high school like the Auckland Grammar School has an infinitely better chance than a boy going to a technical day-school or a district high school. But, after all, what is a district high school for? Is it not for giving the best possible training we can to the greatest possible number of people we can get to profit by it. The training that the pupils get from a rural course is far better for them, whether they are going to become farmers or not, than the training they would receive through preparing for the Junior Civil Service Examination. It is an extremely useful training for anybody, whether they are going on the land or not.

82. You know that the regulation provides that four hours shall be devoted to English and certain other times to other subjects there specified. Do you not think that English, with four hours per week, is receiving its fair proportion?—That may be so; but, after all, was not that a suggested course with which the Department would be satisfied. I do not think it is a mandatory course at all.

83. Was it not adopted by the Auckland Board?—No; I think we modified it. We have only twenty-five hours in the week, and while we would like to give more time to English we cannot do so if we have to teach the other subjects.

84. Do you not think it is more necessary that a child going to a primary or district high school should receive a thorough education in English?—I think more time than four hours per week should be given, but I do not think we can do it. There are other subjects which come under the heading of "English," such as civics and economics.

85. Do you think that one hour per week is sufficient in a high school for arithmetic, one hour for algebra, and one hour for geometry?—It depends on what you are going to do with the subjects. I do not think of these subjects as leading to the examination at all; I look to them as leading to the mental training and development of the child.

86. But, at the present time, is it not a fact that a child who wishes to obtain a position in the Government service must pass an examination?—Yes.

87. And under the proposed rural course, is it not more difficult for a child to do that?—It is more difficult to obtain a high place on the Civil Service list, but not more difficult to pass the examination.

88. You know the appointment of a child to the Civil Service depends on his place on the list?—To some extent.