

114. You see he holds the opinion that it is impracticable?—Yes, but I do not think so.

115. I asked the question because there is a growing demand that the teachers in the back-block schools should be of superior quality than the present, and the only way to get superior teachers is for these small schools to pay what is, relatively speaking, a higher salary than that received by the teachers in the more centrally situated schools?—I would not advocate that, but I think teachers of aided schools should receive more than they at present receive. It is altogether a question of finance.

116. How do the schoolboys of the day compare with the schoolboys of thirty years ago?—I think, speaking generally, the schoolboy of to-day is better equipped for the work of life—I think, more intelligent.

117. You are aware of the statement of tradespeople that the schoolboy coming out of the primary school is in a very unfit condition: you think that statement unwarranted?—I think it is. The primary school is not supposed to turn out tradespeople.

118. In brief, what is your opinion of the existing syllabus?—Speaking very briefly, I consider the syllabus is a good one, the reason being that it is an elastic syllabus, and allows the teacher a very great deal of latitude; and the Inspector also in his method of conducting tests to gauge the efficiency of the school. I feel sure both teachers and Inspectors would be sorry if the syllabus as it stands at present were interfered with to any great extent. No doubt some slight modifications are necessary.

119. I understand you are opposed to uniform school-books?—Yes.

120. What are your reasons?—For the reason that I think the teacher can teach best what he knows and likes best. I think a teacher can teach from a book he knows and appreciates better than from one he does not. I think also it is a great mistake to do too much thinking for any person, teacher or anybody else. If you prescribe the books for the teacher, he is not required to look into a book for himself and to compare one set of books with another. In other words, it tends to deaden him so far as his knowledge of books and literature is concerned.

121. What has been the result of the Government providing free school-books? Do you find them disused?—No; the result has been that there has been a great deal more reading done in our schools than was ever done before as the result of the introduction of these free school-books.

122. Do you believe in the continuous reader?—I believe in continuous reading-books being introduced into the schools, but I also believe in the miscellaneous reader.

123. Do you not think that continuous and silent reading is superior to the miscellaneous reading-book?—You are talking about two different things—the reading-book and reading. So far as reading is concerned, silent reading is one method teachers take in order to secure good reading, and it is a very effective method, properly used.

124. Do you prefer the miscellaneous reading-book?—It is very difficult to answer a question of that kind. I would not say I prefer it, but I should be sorry to see the abolition of the miscellaneous reading-book in our schools.

125. You approve of the policy of providing free school-books?—Yes I do, now that the Department has allowed pupils to purchase a certain proportion of their own reading-books.

126. Knowing the feeling of the people in the Auckland District, do you think there would be any great difficulty in establishing continuation schools for instruction in agriculture between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, utilizing the existing building for that purpose?—Yes, I think there would be a considerable amount of difficulty in inducing young people in the country to attend continuation classes.

127. Do you think it premature to make attendance at these continuation classes, confined to the teaching of agriculture, compulsory?—Yes.

128. What do you think is the feeling in the Auckland Education District in regard to the control and administration of education? Do you think the feeling is in favour of a central system or of local control?—I think the general feeling here is in favour of local control.

129. There is no desire to abolish Boards or Committees?—No.

130. *Mr. Davidson.*] Suppose such a list were made as you suggested, and the education districts remain as they are at present, do you think that would help the teachers in very small districts, such as Grey or Westland, to get out?—Yes. What happens now is this: A vacancy occurs, and we call for applications. If we get an applicant from one of these districts we have nothing to guide us at present. Supposing the names of our own teachers and his name appeared on a general list, that would be a guide to us as to the relative efficiency of each.

131. In a large district like this you would always have a large number of teachers to choose from, and the chances are surely that a man in Westland who was eligible would have a very poor chance of competing successfully against a teacher in Auckland?—I do not know. Suppose we had a school of Grade 4 or Grade 5 vacant; well, an outsider has little or no chance at present of getting to such a school, although there may be outsiders who are more efficient than the ones who would apply for the appointment so far as our own teachers are concerned. In districts like Westland or Grey there might be efficient teachers who would like to get out, and they might be more efficient than our own teachers; but we do not know, and have no means of knowing.

132. That is possible?—It is more than that. I am thinking of a case that came under my notice the other day. A gentleman came to see me, and he impressed me as being a really good man, and one whom I would like to see in our service, but he told me he would not come unless we could give him a Grade 4 or Grade 5 school.

133. Westland has an average school-attendance of about 1,000—about as many as you will find in one of the largest schools in Christchurch or Auckland, where you have about 43,000 pupils: do you think it is in the interests of education that there should be such a small education district as Westland is at present?—No, I think it would be better that the two Islands should be divided into a number of districts—say, four districts.