

I think that the trustees, or some of them, are not averse to the idea that the work of the school should be modernised, and that the "set" system as opposed to the "form" system should be introduced. The Commission will remember that Mr. Beckett expressed himself as strongly in favour of that. He was acquainted with the University College School in London, at which the "set" system was first completely introduced, and he approved of it rather than the other system. Mr. Empson, the headmaster, said they had already in some respects moved in that direction—that though there is not a modern side in the school, yet it was not necessary for every scholar to take up Latin. I have always found them willing to take suggestions, but they have always pleaded, in regard to the teaching of science and the giving of manual instruction, that they had not enough money to provide the laboratories necessary. The laboratory accommodation is altogether insufficient, even for a very small secondary school. For a school of that size you want at least two—and probably three—laboratories distinct from the class-rooms. Except in the case of very elementary science-instruction, you cannot give instruction to more than about twenty-four boys at a time, and, therefore, if you cut out the elementary classes, you have to provide laboratory accommodation for 150 boys; if each laboratory is used by three sets, it means that you must have two laboratories at least, and, unless you can arrange the time-table exactly, it is desirable that there should be three laboratories. I regard it as quite essential in a school of that size, with hardly any boys under twelve years of age, that there should be at least two or three laboratories. The authorities say they would be willing to do that if they had the money. The next point is in regard to the boardinghouses. I have had experience of boardinghouses both in England and here, as I have said before; I have seen all the boardinghouses in connection with secondary schools in this colony, and I have seen some in Australia, and I quite agree with the present tendency to do away with the boardinghouses conducted by the masters. I think that in their place there should be boardinghouses that are hostels, the financial responsibility of which should rest with the Board of Governors. Some schools in New Zealand have that system now—Nelson College notably—and it is by far the most satisfactory system. It is desirable that the headmaster should be relieved from that responsibility; but, of course, he should have the right to make rules and to exercise supervision and influence over the boarders. That power ought to be reserved to him. Each boarding-hostel ought to have a master of the school placed in disciplinary charge of it, but he should not have anything to do with the management, or even have to look after the health of the pupils; he should simply have a general disciplinary charge. I think generally it would be better to have two masters in each hostel. Then, if you had the hostel system, you would also have this advantage: it would be at the absolute determination, in accordance with any regulations or scheme which existed, of the governing body whether free boarding scholarships should be given. That would not be imposing any hardship whatever on the master. I may say Mr. Empson seems to have been generous in the number of boarding scholarships he has given. And, looking at the matter as a financial measure on his part, he could hardly have given any more. But there ought to be nothing to prevent the Board of Governors giving as many as they can afford to give out of their funds. That leads up to the next point. I think there ought to be a large number of boarding scholarships open to country pupils. If there are any children of poor and destitute persons of other islands in the Pacific Ocean, they could be admitted in that way, too. I should suggest that a proportion of the net annual income should be devoted to that. The amount to be devoted to scholarships is defined as one-fifth of the annual income under section 86 of the Education Act. If there is a high school it will not be necessary to give any scholarships for day-pupils, and therefore the whole of that one-fifth might be devoted to free boarders. There might be some places absolutely free and some partly so. With the Government contribution to Government Maori scholars, that would be one way of meeting the case of those pupils who now are selected for Te Aute and St. Stephen's, but are fit to go on with a university education afterwards, and whose parents desire them to go on. Lastly, as to the income and expenditure. When all the estate is improved roads will take 50 acres. If there were 20 acres given to the high school, and 5 acres given for a public school, and 30 acres taken for the purposes of the Wanganui Collegiate School itself—I have been talking matters over with Mr. Empson and Mr. Maclean, and I came to the conclusion that from 30 to 35 acres would be quite enough for their own site, although both of them suggested a smaller area than I do—there would be left from 140 to 150 acres for the endowment of the school. Then the expenditure necessary for the improvement of the estate would be something like £30,000, taking the figures we had given to us. It is possible you might get a contribution for the drainage from the Borough Council; but, assuming that no such contribution is received, there is an expenditure of £30,000 to be met for roads and drainage. New buildings for the present College would consist of three boardinghouses—probably only two would be needed at first—and of the headmaster's house, and the school. The boardinghouses would cost about £4,000 in brick. The headmaster's house and all the accessories belonging to it would not cost more than £2,000, probably only £1,200; and a school far better than the school at present, with science laboratories and workshops, and all the other necessary accessories, could be built for £5,000 or £6,000. The outside figure for all these buildings would be £20,000, and they would provide sufficient accommodation for three hundred boys. So, when the scheme is quite complete, it would mean an expenditure of £50,000. The interest and sinking fund on £50,000 would come to £3,000 a year. It must be remembered that to develop all these things would take about twenty years, and by that time you would have paid off part of the sum if you used the sinking fund right away to pay off the principal. I believe it is the best system to use the sinking fund right away to reduce the debt. The income by that time would be, according to the lowest estimate we have had given to us, £4,000 to £5,000, and, deducting the £3,000 for interest and sinking fund, there would be left a net income of from £1,000 to £2,000 until the debt was paid off. When the debt was paid off there would be an income of from £4,000 to £5,000, and the trustees could give a very large number of boarding scholarships by that time. The clause I suggest would mean that they would have to give boarding scholarships up to the value of £800 or