

comes to saying which engineering classes should be taken at a technical school and which at a university college, one of the questions to be considered is what the character of the work is. Another question is the question of cost. A professional engineering education is an extremely costly thing.

43. To the State?—Somebody has to pay for it. In some places the State does not do much; the individual has to pay. I will take the case of Auckland as an example, or perhaps the simpler way would be to put in the report of a conference on overlapping held in Auckland last year. I will merely state in evidence that a conference was called by the Auckland Education Board to consider the question of overlapping of primary, secondary, technical, and university education. It was held at the Training College, Auckland, on the 26th July, 1911. I was asked to be present, and, when I appeared, was voted to the chair. This report to which I refer was the report I was directed to sign on behalf of the whole conference. It gives the views of the several authorities, and incidentally my own views too. Evidence was taken from the University point of view too. Professor Thomas, Dr. McDowell, and Professor F. D. Brown represented the University. I can explain the position in regard to this, because it is a subject to which the Department has devoted a good deal of attention. I should like to call attention to a section of the Act of 1908, which concerns overlapping, to show you how we interpret it. It is section 180: "The Minister shall refuse to recognize any special, associated, or college class in any subject if he considers that sufficient means of instruction in that subject are already provided by classes under this part of this Act within a radius of five miles from the place where the class seeking recognition is to be held." The Department in any other case of recognition of schools or classes that depends on the Minister generally advises him that even if it is not a subject provided by classes under the Act, if it is a subject open to the public under equally favourable conditions, that we shall construe the provisions as to overlapping in the same way. If it is at a secondary school, for instance, if it is a class equally open to the public with the classes that are under this part of the Act, we shall not recognize both classes, if the question is one that by law is within the discretion of the Minister. It applies to such places as the Elam School of Art. We have refused to recognize at the Elam School of Art classes that would clash with the Auckland Technical School and to recognize classes at the Auckland Technical School similar to those that were already recognized at the Elam School of Art. Both of these are classes under that part of the Act. The Elam School of Art is one of those named in the Twelfth Schedule to the Act. As to "The finance of Education Boards, high school, and manual and technical governing bodies": that is one of the orders of reference that I would suggest we should take in committee. Now, as to the heading, "In what respects school instruction can be improved and made of more practical value in equipping pupils for their future careers": that is another very big question indeed. Of course we hear sometimes a great many demands from business men from time to time that they shall be supplied, so to speak, with boys and girls who are fully equipped to take up the work of an office, whose handwriting is formed to the style that that particular office approves, and whose arithmetic is technical to such a degree that they can take up the particular calculations required in that office, and generally that they are to be worth probably three or four times as much as the 5s. or 10s. a week that is offered. (We hear all sorts of demands from time to time that if they do not mean that mean nothing at all.) I do not suppose anybody in the Commission would have any sympathy with such a demand, and I do not know whether it is worth while discussing it. I want to go a little further, and say it is far more valuable to train boys and girls in such a way as to make them capable of using their brains or intelligence for any special kind of work they are going to do than to make fully qualified junior clerks or typists, or any other finished product we might succeed in getting by special methods. I say that as a general remark to save me from being misunderstood in what I am going to say next. I strongly believe in vocational training right through the school life. By "vocational training" I do not mean the kind of bread-and-butter training I referred to just now—the production of finished products able to take a place in office or shop. By "vocational training" I mean that the subjects of the training should be chosen so that they have some bearing on the future life of the pupil. I hold that if you are going to teach the pupil in the best way you must consider his present environment and his future life. By considering his present environment and future life you are really coming closest of all into contact with nature, with things as they are, and the closer you come into contact with things as they are the more points of sympathy there are with the child, and the more successful your education will be. That is general. To be a little more particular, I think that formerly our primary education and secondary education were what is generally called too literary, but what I would call too formal in character. There was too little for the children to do, too little practice in exercises that would establish a connection between the brain and the hand and eye. Subjects and methods of instruction were so far removed from the children's own experience of things that school-work got to be looked on as something that had no relation whatever to life. As soon as you get a child to think that it does not matter whether he does his school-work well or badly, because it has no practical relation to life, you have really lowered his moral plane; and one of the most remarkable things about our system in all British countries in past years is that it has produced a state of things in the school by which the pupil forgives himself with the utmost ease for a complete neglect of all his school duties, and his fellow-pupils back up his judgment. Nobody regards it as a disgrace to leave school-work quite neglected. That is the case in an ordinary school in almost any British country that I know of. I do not put that down to the fault of the children so largely as to the fact that we have made school life too artificial, and have separated their life interests in the present from their life interests in the future. I feel very strongly about that; whatever shape you are going to give to instruction, it is most important that you should sustain interest by linking it with the child's own life and experience. All sorts of opinions are held as to whether you should teach grammar at all in the primary school, or to what extent