

4. I would point out that the Bill does not touch the question of reserves in any shape or form?—I am basing my argument on the fact that you take into consideration the revenue that has been received from reserves. It has come very prominently before my notice, because in my electorate there is a University reserve, and this reserve is of a very inferior quality of land. At present it returns £40 per year to the revenue for University purposes, but if that land were put up to auction it would bring at least 15s. per acre. That money could be advantageously invested in suburban or town properties, or even if invested at interest it would bring more revenue, and the reserve would then be developed. Under the present conditions of tenure upon which it is held that reserve will never be developed. In Southland and Otago we are in the peculiar position that in 1904 an Act was passed which reserved to the University Council the revenue that was then being received from the University endowments in Otago and Southland, and at any time that the revenue fell short of the amount that was then being received the Consolidated Fund was to make up the difference. In connection with this one reserve, which is in my electorate, the University is at the present time receiving from the consolidated revenue every year equivalent to £200. I maintain there is no necessity for that, and that if that University endowment were sold so that it could be developed—because it will be of no use until it is developed—the State would benefit to the amount of £200 a year.

5. *Mr. J. C. Thomson.*] What is the length of the lease?—A fourteen-years lease. If my suggestion were adopted and that were done the State would benefit, education revenue would benefit, and it would be advantageous all round. The money could then be invested in town or suburban properties. As I am assured that the Gore High School Board is now satisfied in regard to the financial arrangements I will say no more about it. Having come here I thought I would mention the facts which have come under my notice as member for the district, which shows that education reserves of poor farming or grazing lands in the country are not being developed as they ought to be in the interests of the country.

6. *Mr. McCallum.*] Do you know of any secondary school in New Zealand that does not get assistance from the Government direct?—No, they get Government subsidies direct. They get £12 10s. per pupil, but that is not sufficient to carry on the work.

7. Are you not aware that Mr. Reeves in his day practically disendowed all those schools and put secondary schools on the same footing?—He may have done, but it is not so now.

8. Tell me how it is not?—£12 10s. per pupil is paid. I understand under this Bill £13 10s. is to be paid, and I understand the £100 is to be increased slightly. They have not had the £100 subsidy, but have had £12 10s. per pupil, and they have had less than £200 from the endowments, which we consider too poor to be included. That is all they get in our district.

9. Take the Marlborough High School, with an endowment of £400 a year, and Gore with nothing. Gore is a bigger town and, if you like, a more important town. Wherein are you worse off in not having a specific endowment as compared with being left to the tender mercies of the Act?—Because each school that is endowed gets a certain amount (no matter what the endowments may return) from the State. I think it is £6 a year under the Act, and they may be getting £24 in revenue from their reserves. That is why they are worse off. There is one school in the Dominion getting practically £30 per pupil.

10. Which school is that?—I understand it is Gisborne. That is my information.

*Mr. Hogben:* Gisborne's income from endowments last year, after spending money for buildings, was nil.

*Witness:* It is not so now, as I understand the reserves have been relet.

11. *Mr. Hanan.*] You spoke of the education reserves in Southland: do you advocate selling them?—Not the town properties, but all the inferior country properties I would dispose of and invest the money in town and suburban property.

12. Would you give the freehold of those to the tenants?—

*The Chairman:* I do not think it is right to refer to that question of freehold or leasehold in connection with this Education Bill. That has nothing to do with it.

*Witness:* I am prepared to answer the question.

*The Chairman:* I disallow the question.

*Witness:* I would sell the properties I referred to by public tender or public auction.

GEORGE LEIGHTON STEWART, Secretary, Wellington Education Board, made a statement and was examined. (No. 32.)

*Witness:* I desire to say that the following resolutions were passed at a meeting of the Wellington Education Board held to consider the provisions of the Education Bill:—

"1. The Board is of opinion that, while requiring consolidation and in some respects amendment, the existing laws relating to education are working satisfactorily, but that in respect to staffs and salaries a revision should be made this session.

"2. While the Bill possesses many excellent features it is inadvisable to pass, without allowing more time for careful and critical examination, a measure which proposes changes so many and so vital, and therefore it should not proceed this session.

"3. Council of Education: The Board disapproves of the proposed Council of Education, which would be likely to prove detrimental to what has always been a sound local-governing system under Boards and Committees. Should, however, the advisability of establishing such a body be finally affirmed, it urges that the Council should be of smaller numbers, as being more workable than the larger; that, as the people themselves are primarily and vitally concerned, their representatives, the Boards, should have a larger proportionate representation; that there should be a proportionately reduced number of officers of the Department and representatives