

127. Do you think it is possible?—Yes; though the Marlborough teachers could not be expected to contribute from the present salaries they receive, there should be a teachers' provident fund for that purpose.

128. Do you think that your teachers deserve that such a provision should be made for them?—I think that Mr. Smith's report shows that they work fairly well. There are some very brilliant teachers in this district.

129. It is your opinion that the question of the retirement of teachers, on some basis or other, is one that will press heavily on the colony in the future?—Yes.

130. You have a school at Renwicktown?—Yes.

131. You have another small school at Springlands?—Yes.

132. Then, in addition to the borough schools, you have four schools up to Tuamarina: what is the distance from Renwicktown to the borough schools?—Six miles and a half.

133. And from Tuamarina to the borough schools?—Seven miles and a half.

134. Then, about thirteen miles and a half would be the diameter of a circle, in which the borough is the centre?—Yes.

135. On the larger schools you save money?—Yes.

136. Do you think if something of the American system were brought into operation it would not be better—that is, instead of establishing so many of these schools within a few miles of each other, there should be some mode of conveyance to come central place, an effort to bring about centralisation?—No, I do not think such a scheme would work; the children have long distances to come to these schools.

137. But supposing the State did it?—I do not think it would do. We do subsidise an omnibus between Para and Tuamarina, and it costs us £50 a year—that is, for conveying the children back to Para; in the evening the train does not suit.

138. Do you think it is a decided advantage to those children?—Yes, it is.

139. Do you think a further extension of that system would be still more advantageous?—Yes. I think Springlands is sufficiently large; there are from 200 to 260. In Renwicktown some of the children come two or three miles to school.

140. How far is the Grovetown School from your main school?—A mile and a half from the Blenheim Railway-station.

141. Do you think that is too far to come?—Well, some of the children live another mile and a half down the river, and others nearer Spring Creek, and they meet half-way.

142. Have you any limit that there should be between the schools?—I think the limit is three miles. The regulation says, "The Board will not undertake to establish a school in any district unless within three miles of the intended site of the schoolhouse there are at least thirty children of school-age. No Board school will be established within five miles of any existing school, measured by the nearest road."

143. Was that regulation in force when you built Springlands?—I was not a member of the Board then; from Mr. Smith I gather it was not.

144. I suppose, as a matter of fact, members of the Board are subjected to a very great deal of pressure to establish these schools?—Yes, by the local residents; the parents all round the district petition us.

145. In regard to the condition of some of these buildings, I suppose you will soon have to replace them?—Yes; the Picton School is very old.

146. What about Grovetown?—The teacher's residence there is very old; the school is partly new—by new, I mean it is ten or fifteen years old.

147. With regard to what was told us of the Committee of the borough school subdividing it and claiming capitation on a basis of two schools instead of one, do you think that principle should be extended to the other districts of the colony? Do you approve of the existing state of affairs?—No; the whole school should be entirely under one management.

148. Your present system, in your opinion, does not tend towards proficiency and good management: do you think any question of that sort likely to arise?—No; and in regard to the question of morality, I think nothing of it.

149. What is your definition of a sewing-mistress?—We are very easy-going in that respect. I think any woman can sew; 90 per cent. of them can teach sewing: that is our definition.

150. When you appoint a sewing-mistress, do you appoint her to teach sewing alone, or do you take an elastic sort of definition of the term and say she has to teach reading, writing, &c.?—As a general rule, sewing-mistresses do little more than the sewing for their £1 a month.

151. In a school we went into yesterday we found a young girl who we were told was the sewing-mistress, the attendance being 42: were we correctly informed when we were told that the young girl was the sewing-mistress, receiving £12 per annum, and working five hours every day in the week teaching?—Yes, she was doing the work at her own will and pleasure. The Board do not ask her to do it.

152. What time is she supposed to give to the teaching of sewing?—From Mr. Smith I gather an hour two or three times a week.

153. Then, her employment for the other four hours every day in the week is irregular?—No; it is purely voluntary labour on the part of the teacher.

154. Do you think it would be a wise thing for the Boards of the colony to admit this question of voluntary labour in schools?—No; it should be discountenanced.

155. Your opinion is that your Board is not doing wisely in allowing this state of things?—This is the first I have heard of this affair. I think it is a purely exceptional case, and not a general rule by any means.

156. In regard to the question of colonial administration, when you stated that Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin should contribute towards the cost of these small Sounds