

many years that I think they are entitled to a pension. While on the subject I think I may say that is another matter for the Commission to take into consideration. I think the suggestion should be made to the Government that teachers who have been in the service of Boards for some considerable time should receive consideration. We have one or two teachers under our Board who have simply broken down, and yet we have to pay their salaries just the same, for we cannot turn them on to the streets. One of the teachers I mention has been teaching for twenty years.

143. As a matter of fact, your contention is that you are not able to pay your teachers a living-wage?—Yes.

144. And after years of service you are practically obliged to keep them on when they should be retired in the public interest?—Yes.

145. Do you think it possible for your Board, or any other Board, to arrange some scheme for retiring teachers?—Yes, if an amount was paid to each Board so that a portion could be kept back.

146. I mean, under present conditions would it be possible?—Under present conditions it is impossible to do anything.

147. Under a colonial scale, do you not think that a general system could be arranged by the Government for the benefit of the teachers throughout the colony?—Yes, I think so.

148. You are of opinion that you would be able to work better under a colonial scale than going on as you are at present?—Yes.

149. You also say that the small schools are your greatest difficulty?—Yes.

150. *Mr. Luke.*] Have you any reserves in this neighbourhood?—Yes; if it had not been for them we should have had to close the smaller schools.

151. What are the endowments?—Approximately, £150 a year. In regard to these small districts, I think we should receive a goldfields allowance of 10 per cent. I think the Grey, Westland, and Taranaki Districts should receive it.

152. *Mr. Gilfedder.*] Would you include Southland also?—Yes, if Southland is entitled.

153. You think they should be incorporated in the colonial scale?—Yes.

154. *Mr. Smith.*] Does your Board limit the number of children for which it will open an aided school?—No; we have always treated every case separately.

155. If you had an application from the parents of five children to open a school, would you do so?—Possibly, if they brought enough evidence to bear on the Board.

156. Do you think, as a matter of justice, that they should have a school?—Yes, I think they are entitled to have a school. My opinion is this: that when there is only an attendance of 5 or 6 the residents should come to the assistance of the Board, and perhaps pay half the cost of keeping a teacher. The majority of the Board are, however, against any direct tax on the residents.

157. You stated that you received £150 per annum from the primary reserve?—Yes, approximately; it goes towards paying the teachers in the ordinary way.

158. *Mr. Gilfedder.*] What is the attendance required before a school is entitled to the services of a pupil-teacher?—I think, from 36 to 50.

159. Would you not consider if the Government were to give an extra capitation grant for the small schools that there would be no finality to them?—No; I think you could depend upon the members of the Board doing what they thought was advisable in the interest of all concerned.

160. Then, you do not think your Board, or any Board, would be inclined to establish too many of these aided schools with very small attendances?—No.

161. Do you think it should be stipulated by the department that a school should not be established unless the average attendance was at least 10?—I think that average rather high. I should be agreeable to say that a school should not be established unless there was an average attendance of 7.

162. You realise the fact that the more of these schools there are established the less will be the remuneration of the teachers?—Yes.

163. You spoke about bonuses: what did you refer to?—The last amount voted by Parliament.

164. Do you give bonuses on teachers' certificates in this district?—No.

165. Did you formerly adopt that system?—No.

166. Have you looked through the suggested scale?—Yes.

167. Did you notice the minimum certificate required by a teacher?—No; I think the certificates should be according to classification.

168. Did your Board ever adopt the system of half-time schools?—No.

169. You are of opinion that such a system could not be carried out advantageously in this district?—Yes, I am of that opinion.

170. Do you consider there are too many pupil-teachers employed by your Board?—Yes.

171. Would it not be better to have one assistant instead of two pupil-teachers?—Yes. In the Greymouth School we should have at least one extra male teacher, and less pupil-teachers.

172. Your staffing is one headmaster, six assistants, and seven pupil-teachers?—Yes; but I think the staffing under the colonial scale would be better.

173. You think, on the whole, the suggested scale would be an improvement on what exists in your district?—Yes. With regard to the capitation grant, in the case of some of the larger schools the capitation of £3 15s. would be quite sufficient.

174. Education Boards financially strong, such as the North Canterbury and Otago Boards, would not require a capitation of £4, in your opinion?—I could not say definitely. As regards our Board, we have been in a hopeless state of bankruptcy for the last three years.

175. You do not discourage the employment of male pupil-teachers?—No, we do not discourage them; we are unable to get them.