

inflicted on our men, from which they have suffered up to the present day, not only financially, but in bitterness of feeling that has been fermenting throughout the district, and becoming acute up to the last few months. That ought not to have taken place, because, considering the social and economic conditions under which we live, I do not think that the question admits of any argument. You must pay a man considerably more than a woman. A man is justified in having a much larger wage, for when a man enters the profession he is there for life. In the case of women, nine out of every ten expect to be out of the profession before five years are over their heads. I have heard you ask the question this morning why men should wish to leave the profession. My experience is that teachers are hopeless failures outside their profession, except the exceptional genius who would be a success in anything he turned his attention seriously to. Turning now to the consideration of the details of the proposed scale, I am of opinion that, although there are a good many defects in it—defects that you might call crudities—the scale before you has one point of such supreme importance that if it had no other merit I would support it against our own. The first defect that I see is one that shows a want of continuity in the development of the scale. The scale begins with a master and then introduces the first increment, a mistress. That I approve of—a mistress rather than a pupil-teacher. That is at 35. A question arises whether it should be at 35 or a little further on. In North Canterbury we meet the difficulty between 35 and 41 by putting on a sort of monitorial labour. God forbid that teachers should ever be prepared in that way for the profession. It is there that our system and every system in the colony has been steadily at fault for many years—the preparing of the people that are to succeed us in the profession. I am in favour of introducing the mistress at 41, because by this means a very great saving will be effected that might very well be applied in other directions. Under the modification I suggest, £12 would be paid to the monitor giving the required assistance between 35 and 41; and we would increase the master's salary very substantially, to mark the difficulties he has to encounter at that stage. Instead of a £2 increment he would go rapidly up: £2 10s. at 36, £3 at 37, £3 10s. at 38, £4 at 40. Such a teacher is doing the hardest work in the profession, bar none. Here the question of the certificate required comes in; but putting that aside just now, and going on with the scale, we find at 76 it is proposed to introduce the first pupil-teacher. My idea is that we might defer that to 81. There is one thing in this scale that is proposed that I certainly would not approve—that is, the paying of a master at 36, when he has got a mistress, the same salary that he got when he was at 35. You must pay a man, in a measure, according to the work he does. There is no rosy billet in the teaching profession so far as I know, but if there is a rosy billet it is that of the master of a school running from 36 to 50 where a mistress is provided. Going on with the scale, then: A mistress is introduced at 100. I think it would be preferable to introduce a pupil-teacher instead at 110. After that the scale might readily be made to develop on right lines. At 600, however, a serious dislocation, amounting to a compound fracture, occurs, and the serious nature of the defect caused by the want of continuity at this stage will be at once apparent if you have a school staffed according to the scale at 601, and then when the attendance falls below this point—to, say, 600—try to make the reductions in staff and salaries required by the scale. The Inspector-General has explained how the dislocation of the staffing can be remedied. He had made a sudden break, and departed from the principle that determined the previous staffing of the schools. It is a very important point, because in two or three districts there are a goodly number of schools, in Auckland and Otago especially, where this would apply. It does not affect us here in North Canterbury in the least. Any other criticisms that I may have to offer, more especially as regards the financial details of the scale, will probably be brought out in questions from the members of the Commission. I have thus far only dealt with the numerical strength of the staff. There is just one other point, but it is of the very greatest importance, and one on which I shall support this scale notwithstanding its defects, for they can be easily adjusted, and that is this—probably the Inspector-General had it in his mind's eye: that the staffing is so liberal, so splendidly liberal, up to that point of 600, when there will probably be a readjustment, that I am certain if the proposed scale came into operation in this district we should immediately proceed to reduce the work of our pupil-teachers in school by one-half. I consider that we have here an opportunity to effect the most splendid reform that has ever taken place since the Education Act was passed, and on that point alone would I support the scale, with, as I said, all its defects. Two years ago I happened to go home to the Old Country after an absence of eighteen or nineteen years, and of all the reforms that had been instituted in my absence the best was that relating to pupil-teachers. Under the most enlightened School Boards—Boards like that of Glasgow—whose administration is universally commended, the condition of the pupil-teachers has been vastly improved of recent years. Instead of being compelled, as they formerly were, to slave all day teaching in school, with very limited opportunities for improving their scholarship, these young people are now restricted in their actual teaching to half, or at most two-thirds, of the day, the remainder of the school time being devoted to study. Now, under the liberal provision of staff proposed in this colonial scale, New Zealand should have no difficulty whatever in following the noble example of the Old Country in carrying out this very necessary reform in the training of our young teachers. How readily the means of reform would be available here in North Canterbury you can understand at once by casting a glance at the organization of the most important group of schools we have—viz., those whose attendance ranges from 420 to 480, including Richmond, St. Albans, Waltham, Addington, Woolston, Lyttelton, and Kaiapoi. For each of these schools the scale of staff at present in operation with us provides six certificated teachers and four pupil-teachers. Under the colonial scale there would be seven adults and five pupil-teachers—an addition of one assistant and one pupil-teacher; and this strengthening of the staff would make it an easy matter to effect a great deduction in the time that the pupil-teachers would be