

required to engage in the actual work of teaching. In concluding my remarks, I have, however, to point out that our four city schools would receive no benefit at all from the introduction of the colonial scale. They occupy a unique position among New Zealand schools, and would require to be treated with special consideration under any colonial scheme. Regarding the financial aspect of the scale, I am disposed to think that I had better postpone the expression of my opinions on the various salaries proposed until I am questioned on these matters by members of the Commission.

194. *Mr. Weston.*] You have read this colonial scale?—Yes, I have gone through it.

195. Have you sufficiently studied it to satisfy yourself that the allowance to teachers, together with all the charges that will be attached to the capitation, can be effected on a capitation of £4?—I think so. Everything in this scale can be carried out with the £4 capitation.

196. But would that scale be exceeded, so far as North Canterbury is concerned, in the amount of incidentals?—I am not prepared to say, but I should think it would, because I have always maintained that North Canterbury was far too liberal in the matter of incidental expenses. Compared with other districts, our practice is positively absurd, and the teachers are now suffering reductions which they should never have been called upon to suffer.

197. You, of course, visit the various country districts regularly: are you able to tell us, so far as you can see, if there has been any waste in regard to the incidentals by the various Committees?—I could not say, because I have not an opportunity of overlooking the Committees' accounts.

198. Have you seen any signs of extravagance?—No; occasionally signs of neglect.

199. How would a colonial scale work with regard to the smaller schools?—Aided schools below 14 are receiving a capitation of £5. I have always believed there must be some limit with regard to the Government grants for maintaining these small schools. I think the plan adopted in this district is in the main a sound one. For some years it has been the usual practice to grant this capitation allowance of £5 to a small school, which might be composed of three or four families, with an attendance of 10, or, under exceptional circumstances, even less. I think we have fifteen coming under the aided conditions. There are eleven aided schools under 15. Well, the system here is, we make the allowance on the condition that the settlers in the district will, by contributions of their own, make up the salary of the teacher to what you might call a living-wage. I am doubtful how far the Board is right in accepting maintenance in the household of one of the families as an equivalent for salary. My own opinion is that it must be paid to the teacher in hard cash, or else there is a violation of the Truck Act.

200. At Nelson, I am told that even one child in a house is subsidised, and that the capitation may be paid even to the mother or daughter to teach in that house: what do you think of that?—If that were made a colonial scheme, and carried out throughout the colony, you would simply swamp the education system of New Zealand.

201. Speaking of the colony generally, what, in your opinion, should be the minimum number of children subsidised?—That is a harder question to answer. I have said in our district we have eleven aided schools; sometimes the average attendance is 8; in one case it is as low as 7. If you could expect that reasonable care would be taken in making the grant, as we have done, I think benefits might occasionally be conferred on very small groups. I should say, however, that the number in attendance entitling to a grant under a fixed rule should not be below 10.

202. I presume that would cut out a large number of children who are scattered, we will say, through the Nelson District and the Sounds?—I am sorry that should be. Still, there must be compensation somewhere. The settlers in those districts, for instance, get land very much cheaper than we can in Canterbury.

203. Returning to the scale, do you think that the relative positions of the infant mistress, headmistress, and the first assistant master or mistress, as the case may be, are sufficiently equitable?—Which groups are you referring to?

204. More especially from 250 to 600. In North Canterbury there has been a very strong feeling on the part of the headmistress in regard to her position as compared with the infant mistress, and the financial position of the first assistant masters and mistresses: do you think that all those points have been sufficiently considered by the draftsman of the suggested scale, and whether the prospects of their relative positions are equitable?—That includes some of the minor defects in the scheme. The introduction of the lowest mistress at £80 is an improvement on our scale. I think the Inspector-General calls that a working-wage, and I think he is right. In the big city schools the lowest class of mistress gets the same salary as the mistress going to the country. We find, if we invite applications for a position of mistress in the country at a salary of £80, we will get a comparatively small number of applicants, a few of them well qualified—a very few. If we invite applications for the lowest position, carrying the same salary, in the city schools, we would be swamped with applications, and quite a number of them have the very highest qualifications; so that in the lower class of appointments we can staff these schools much cheaper. In the city schools we have no difficulty in getting young assistants at a comparatively low salary, because they are continuing their education at college, and reaping other advantages. Unfortunately, in this district the Board exercises little or no control over these appointments in the city schools.

205. Will this scale as prepared either encourage or hinder applications by assistant masters in our town schools for higher positions in our country schools, seeing, as you have just said, as one knows from experience, that there is a disinclination on the part of the assistant masters and mistresses to go from town?—It would hinder at the stages following on the first introduction of a mistress in the country. We in North Canterbury pay a mistress in this class of school between £75 and £100, against a fixed salary of £80 in the proposed scale. The salary ought to go up a little there. A readjustment of salaries in the scale might readily be made to meet the difficulty.