

56. Do you think that the tone of the departments would suffer if they were merged?—I think not; not having any experience of mixed schools, I cannot, of course, speak with confidence upon that point.

57. Do you think that the efficiency would be likely to suffer?—No; it should be rather increased.

58. Then, I understand you to say that by the amalgamation of the schools in Nelson the standard of efficiency would be greatly improved?—Yes, because the children could be classified better.

59. You suggest, in the first of your recommendations from the Nelson Institute, that in districts in which the cost of living is exceptionally high the salaries of the teachers should be raised proportionately: has not a district of this kind corresponding advantages?—By the term “districts” we did not mean education districts. I think there are nothing but disadvantages in many cases.

60. Give me an example?—Take many of the schools on the Buller River; take Lyell, Murchison, Inangahua Junction, places in some of which in the winter-time there are only about three hours of sunlight: In places like these, where there is merely a small mining population, people are deprived of many enjoyments and comforts that they would get in a town such as Nelson, and they have nothing by way of compensation.

61. In No. 3 of your recommendations, could you suggest any other plan? Have there been any suggestions made by any of the teachers with a view to overcoming the difficulty?—None save the one stated in the recommendation; that is the only one that has been brought forward.

62. Do you think, are you of the opinion, that the teachers would be satisfied if such a recommendation were approved of?—Yes, because during the other three-quarters of the year these schools get a normal attendance.

63. Has the difference been estimated between the March and the June attendances in this district?—Yes; I have had it submitted to me two or three times.

64. Is the difference very marked?—Yes, very marked; as much as 30 per cent. in some cases.

65. You have read the proposed scale?—Yes.

66. Do you think it provides generous payment to the small schools?—Yes.

67. Much better than the payments now made by the Nelson Board?—Yes.

68. Then, you think there is a great improvement?—Yes.

69. With reference to your recommendation 6, do you mean to ask that special salaries shall be paid to the teachers in the town schools, or that, assuming there is an average attendance of so many, and the scale is made up on a certain capitation grant, the gross amount which would be paid by the department shall be divided amongst the teachers concerned in these separate departments?—The meeting at which that question was discussed was chiefly composed of town teachers, and we did not think it would be fitting for us to suggest what the salaries in our special case should be; but we decided to bring under your notice the fact that some special regulations should be made. For instance, the attendance at the Boys' Central is between 250 and 300, and according to the proposed scale we should have an infant mistress, although we have no infants. It is obvious that some modification of the scale would have to be made to meet our special needs; but we have not thought it fitting to make any special recommendation.

70. Would the distribution of the proposed capitation grant among the teachers of the six schools at the present time raise or lower the present salaries?—It would amount in the aggregate to about £150 more than is at present paid, while we have two teachers and two probationers more on our staff at present than would be allowed if the whole were to be amalgamated into one school.

71. *Mr. Gilfedder.*] Your salary is now £300; according to the Board's scale a headmaster's salary ranges from £250 to £300: how did you manage to get up to the £300?—I was appointed at a salary of £300 before the scale was brought into operation; other teachers are supposed to apply to the Board for an increase. At the beginning of the year the Board considers applications.

72. *Mr. Hogben.*] In reply to Mr. Davidson, you admitted it would be a gain in efficiency to have a sewing-mistress in a school of from 35 to 40, as against making the limit 35 for an unassisted sole teacher: is that so?—Yes, with the understanding that the teacher would be a more efficient one if a higher salary were paid.

73. Do you not think that there is a limit to the receptive power of a boy or girl, and that it should determine the number of pupils a teacher can take?—Yes.

74. Whatever amount of class-teaching there may be, there is still involved the question of individual tuition, is there not?—Yes.

75. Either directly or indirectly?—Yes.

76. Such staffing would not be your ideal in regard to those schools?—No, it would not be the ideal staffing.

77. You were asked a question as to whether a country school of 36 with all standards and two teachers was harder or easier to manage than a town school class of 50, and you said you considered the country school the easier to manage, did you not?—Yes.

78. Would you hold that opinion still if you took the average size of such schools—say, two teaching 55 with all standards, and one to teach a class of 50?—I should still say that the country school with two on the staff would be the easier.

79. To teach all standards?—Yes.

80. You stated that there would be difficulty in teaching practical science in small country schools: did you refer to physical science or observational science?—I referred at the time to physical science.

81. Would that remark apply with so much force to observational science, such as botany?—No.