

529. Would it be more economical?—That I cannot say; I do not think in our own town schools it would be.

530. I mean in the outlying districts: for instance, if you had a district with a long valley and a fairly good road running through it, instead of having five or six schools, if you had one central school, well equipped and up to date, and the children conveyed to it, would it not be very desirable and more economical?—Yes, it would.

531. What is your opinion as to placing Inspectors under the control of the Central Department?—I have no opinion on the matter.

532. *Mr. Stewart.*] I wish to ask one or two questions as to the staffing of your side-schools at the present time: can you kindly tell me the number of pupil-teachers in your side-schools?—We have one side-school—the Tasman Street School. I cannot give you the number of scholars attending the school, though I think the average for 1900 was 126. The staffing is a head-teacher and three pupil-teachers. There are two rooms, the second room being in charge of the third-year pupil-teacher.

533. What is your opinion as to the advisableness or otherwise of such an arrangement as that?—I think the head-teacher deserves an assistant; the work of supervising and teaching is too much. I think it is expecting too much of a third-year pupil-teacher to take charge of the room.

534. Did your Committee make any representation to the Board in the matter?—We did so when the school started. I believe the wish of the Board, or the Inspector, was to have a school in which a third-year pupil-teacher might gain experience in taking charge of a room alone.

535. Do you know anything of the circumstances of the Haven Road School?—Yes; there is a headmistress, an assistant, and three pupil-teachers.

536. The average attendance is somewhere about 150, is it not?—I believe it is 166. The infant-room with about 90 children is in charge of a pupil-teacher.

537. Is there any other teacher in the room besides the pupil-teacher?—I think there are two pupil-teachers.

538. Practically, the room is managed by the three pupil-teachers, is it not?—No; only the two; the other is with the headmistress.

539. Then, two pupil-teachers have charge of the 90 children?—Yes; that is, children below the First Standard.

540. In reference to the trend of modern education, do you think it would be advisable to take elementary technical work in all the schools?—No; it would be impossible.

541. You think that to have elementary technical training it would be necessary to have the schools combined?—Yes; we do a little kindergarten work.

542. With regard to the amount of strain or otherwise entailed in teaching a school of, say, 46 with all standards, and two teachers, and the management of a large class, have any facts come under the notice of your Committee which would lead you to form any opinion as to the amount of strain involved?—We had one case of a young lady who had been an assistant in a country school and who had applied to come to Nelson; we appointed her a pupil-teacher here, and she thought she was going to have a comparatively easy time, but, on the contrary, she found the work very much harder than she had been accustomed to.

543. Do you think the children in country schools are more difficult to manage than the children in town schools?—I think the children in town schools more difficult to manage.

544. Do you know anything of the conditions of teaching in country schools at all?—Yes.

545. Upon all grounds, you, as Chairman of the Committee, are in favour of establishing one or two schools in place of the number you have at present—that is to say, you are in favour of combination?—Yes.

546. On the grounds of efficiency, mainly?—Yes.

547. *Mr. Luke.*] Is there only one School Committee in the Town of Nelson?—Yes.

548. You believe that it would be advisable in the case of Nelson and Richmond that the boys and girls should work together in one school?—Yes.

549. *Mr. Hill.*] Is it the general opinion of your Committee that the schools should be merged?—I cannot say; we never discussed the question. In conjunction with Mr. McKenzie, I appear before you as an individual, not as representing the Committee.

550. You have found up to the present time that the plan of separation works fairly well?—Yes.

551. Have you heard any wish that they should be merged?—I think it is a necessity; I think the Committee would be in favour of it.

552. Has there been any application made to the Education Board to that effect, so far as you are aware?—No.

553. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] I understand you are of opinion that there are too many small country schools?—Yes.

554. Could the children of the settlers in back-country districts get education without so many of those schools?—I do not see that they could, unless there was some means of conveying the children to a centrally situated school.

555. Do you think it is better to build schools than to convey the children as you suggest?—I think pressure has been brought to bear on Boards by the country settlers for the establishment of so many of these schools. When representations are made to the Board for a school they are mostly from country settlers.

556. You think the children in the back country should get education?—Certainly.

557. So far as the question of conveying the children is concerned, do you not think it would be more expensive, and, moreover, do you not think that at times it would be impossible, to convey them on account of bad roads and other causes?—Yes.