

628. You do not know if it is the custom in country schools to discourage males, and encourage females, in order that they may teach sewing?—No, I have not heard so.

629. Do you consider that we should adopt the principle of equal pay and equal work with regard to the salaries of male and female teachers? Take a school of 30: if a female can teach that school as efficiently as a male, should she not receive the same remuneration?—I think that in the lower positions you might give the same salary. In the higher positions, I think, there are other reasons that would preclude an equal salary.

630. Has your Committee any guiding principle in regard to the recommendation of teachers for appointments, as far as their certificates are concerned: is it the rule or is it the exception that those who hold the higher certificates get the appointment?—The higher certificate would, of course, influence the Committee in deciding who should get the appointment. Of course, there are other things as well as scholastic attainments to be considered in choosing a teacher.

Rev. J. H. MacKENZIE, Member of the Nelson School Committee.

*Rev. Mr. MacKenzie:* Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I sympathize in the main with all that has been said by Mr. Kempthorne in regard to the conditions and the staffing of the schools. With regard to the number of pupil-teachers we have employed, I think there are too many—the Committee thinks so too—and we have applied to the Board for assistants; but owing to the lack of funds we are obliged to have pupil-teachers. The Board has been told that it is simply sweating to employ a girl for £30 a year when they should at least pay £80. With regard to what has been said in reference to the amalgamation of schools, I would like to emphasize the fact that the Toitoto School is better known as the Girls' Central School, for people outside of Nelson imagine that it is some ten miles away from the town. Two years ago we made as strong an appeal as we possibly could to the Government for the site of the disused gaol, with the conviction that we would get it too, for the medical profession have all condemned the present site of the school as unhealthy and unfit for the purpose for which it is used, but we are still as far from getting it as ever. We have applied more than once to the Board to make the change, and the last reply we received was that they would keep the matter steadily in view, keep it before them, and—it is a good way before them yet, as far as I can see. It is the opinion of the Committee that this is a most important matter for Nelson at the present time in things educational.

631. *The Chairman.*] Is the site available: is it the property of the Government?—Yes, it is the property of the Government; and we have good reason to believe that we should have got the site if the Board had said that as soon as possible they would remove the school. I would suggest to the Commission that anything definite in regard to the amalgamation of the different schools should involve the removal of this school from its present unhealthy site, for I think that is one very strong point which would lead the Committee to sympathize with the proposal for the amalgamation of the schools. A good many of the children have to attend private schools, for on account of their delicate health they are unable to go to Toitoto School; and I was told, only two days ago, that on account of the unhealthy situation of the latter school between 30 and 40 children were lost to us. In regard to the abolishing of country schools, or, rather, merging them into a central school, might I suggest it would have to be done under compulsion, under orders from the Government? The Boards could scarcely carry it out owing to their peculiar position, elected as they are by the different Committees. Mr. Kempthorne has spoken with regard to how Committees may feel with reference to transferring teachers. We have had some experience on that point, and we maintain that we should be consulted in the matter of transfer. We had to take legal opinion on the matter, and we were advised by the highest legal authority that the consultation required in the Act is a reality and not a sham. All the facts that would lead the Board to a decision must be put before the Committee concerned. The Nelson Board sends us all applications from certificated teachers, and it would be better if the appointments were simply in the hands of the Board or the Committee. As to the cost of living, I have lived in Southland, Canterbury, and Nelson, and I know that it is much more expensive to live in Nelson. One other point that would lead us to favour the amalgamation of schools: frequently children are passed from the Second Standard into the Third when they are not equal to the requirements of the Third Standard, and if the schools were all gathered together under a head-teacher he would be able to judge as to whether they were fit for the promotion or otherwise.

632. *Mr. Davidson.*] Is the gaol-site still available?—Yes.

633. You are of opinion that the chief difficulty in the matter of centralising the schools, doing away with a large number of the present small ones, is the objection of the Committee?—I think so, and in getting the Boards to act unless under orders.

634. I understand you are of the opinion that frequently the pressure brought to bear by Committees is so great that Education Boards cannot resist it?—Yes, I believe so.

635. Many of the education evils, you will probably admit, are due to the methods of electing Education Boards?—Yes.

636. *Mr. Stewart.*] With regard to the Toitoto Valley School, one side of the question you have spoken upon is the healthiness or otherwise of the situation: let me ask you, is the site a central one?—It is the very opposite.

637. Then, as a matter of fact, I may take it that a very large proportion of the girls who attend that school have a much greater distance to go than they would have if any amalgamation were brought about?—Yes, that is so. There are a few coming from The Port; but you cannot take The Port into consideration when you think of the Town of Nelson.

638. You think that the majority have to be considered?—Yes.

639. I think you said that about 40 pupils were lost in consequence of the unhealthy state of the Toitoto Valley School?—Between 30 and 40.

640. At the capitation grant of £4 that would mean a loss of £160 to the Board?—Yes. Perhaps a number of the children go to the private schools for other reasons; but I know of at