

least four or five families where the parents would not allow the children to go to the Toitoti School on account of the unhealthiness of the site.

641. Practically, there is a great loss of income to the Board on that account?—Yes.

642. A hundred and sixty pounds would go considerably towards bringing about this amalgamation?—Yes.

643. I mean it would represent the interest of a very considerable sum that would go towards bringing an amalgamation about?—Yes.

644. You said something about the peculiar position of members of Boards: I assume that refers to what Mr. Davidson spoke of, as to the method of election?—Yes; the Commission are aware of the way in which members are elected. Under the present arrangement two of these small schools have as much influence as we have in Nelson; in fact, one of these small schools has as much to say as the six schools in Nelson, with their 1,000 children.

645. You do not think that is in the interests of education?—No.

646. *Mr. Luke.*] Are there many private schools in Nelson?—There is established one private denominational school; other than that I think there are two small infant schools.

647. *Mr. Hill.*] What is the greatest distance the girls have to go to the Central School?—Some have to come from the far side of "the Wood."

648. How far is that?—About two miles and a half.

649. Is the site which you propose a more central one than the one you have at present?—Yes; it is in the very centre of the town.

650. How long has the present Girls' School been built?—I believe about twenty-two years.

651. Is it a wooden building?—Yes.

652. I notice you have female teachers in the Boys' School: has any proposal ever been made to have male teachers in the Girls' School?—We have only had female pupil-teachers in the Boys' School since February. Female pupil-teachers find a difficulty in managing boys in the country schools. It was arranged that two female teachers should be in the Boys' Central School.

653. I understood you to say that your Committee is of the opinion that you have too many pupil-teachers at work?—Yes, we have.

654. I suppose you appoint pupil-teachers to your schools who have passed Standard VI.?—Yes.

655. Have they had any previous training for the position of pupil-teacher, do you know?—None whatever.

656. Then, they are placed in charge of a class?—Yes; they are so placed that, in my opinion, they are in charge.

657. Do you think that a plan is possible whereby some arrangements could be made for the training of young people before being sent to take charge of a class—as, for example, taking matriculated pupils who are desirous of becoming teachers and giving them twelve months' training beforehand?—Yes; I do not think the present plan is a very happy one, and I do not think it is good for the children. In the Hampden Street School there is a teacher and one pupil-teacher, with an average attendance of 94.

658. Then, you are of opinion that a school with a mistress and one pupil-teacher, with an average attendance of 94, is greatly understaffed?—Yes.

659. Do the female teachers in your schools hold certificates of the same grade as the males?—Speaking from memory, I do not think they are quite so high.

660. Do you require from them as much work?—That is really a matter for the Inspectors.

661. They have the same number of pupils to teach as the males?—Yes, I think they have. Of course, the numbers vary, but they are expected to do the same work.

662. They do not receive the same salaries, of course?—No.

663. Do you think they deserve the same salaries—that is, if they do the same work?—Yes, I think so.

664. *Mr. Gilfedder.*] By what process of evolution does it come to pass that you have only one Committee for all these town schools?—Well, in Nelson we live very much on tradition; it has been the position from the beginning. The separation of the boys and girls I never saw until I came here, and I have often pointed out the loss upon it.

665. Especially in the election of members of the Board?—Yes.

666. In regard to the question of a dual scale of salaries in districts where the cost of living varies, do you think that is necessary?—If the salaries are fair all round I think it is unnecessary.

667. In Nelson, supposing the cost of living is not so high as round the Coast districts, would you not require to differentiate between the salaries?—That might be necessary.

668. With regard to consulting Committees, you consider that Boards are legally bound to consult the Committees: you say the Act says so?—Yes.

669. Supposing they do not abide by the recommendation of the Committee—they are not bound to do so—what then?—I have been on one or two Committees, and I have seen the Boards beaten.

670. How many pupils do you consider that a teacher unaided can efficiently teach in a small country school?—I have no experience in regard to that.

671. In the Toitoti Valley School they are all female teachers, are they not?—Yes.

672. Are there any male teachers in the Haven Road School?—Yes; one.

673. Any male teachers in Hampden Street?—Yes.

674. Is there a male teacher in Tasman Street School?—Yes, but he is away on the sick-list.

675. Any male teachers in Brook Street School?—No.

676. Then, in the Nelson schools the greater proportion of teachers are females?—Yes, because the males do not apply.

677. Is it a fact that the Committees encourage females?—No; the very opposite is the case.