

776. You think that there should be a certain number of prizes in order to keep up the standard of the profession and attract the young men?—Certainly. I think it would be better to grade assistants according to their status.

777. You are in favour of a colonial scale of staff and salaries?—Yes.

778. *The Chairman.*] Reference has been made to the large salaries in certain schools as being the prizes of the profession: do you think that those prizes are numerous?—No.

779. Do vacancies frequently occur so that prizes can be gained by the teachers in the smaller schools?—Very rarely.

780. Is it not the case that teachers appointed to the headmasterships of such schools remain there virtually for life?—I cannot say; my experience is not wide enough for that.

781. Is there any method by which they can be called upon to retire?—No.

782. Then is it not a fact that they hold an interest in those schools for life?—I cannot say.

783. Do you think that a headmaster would cast a lot of his own duties on to his assistants?—No more than he could possibly help.

784. In your opinion, does it require an assistant to hold better credentials and qualifications in a school of 500 than in a school of 300?—No.

785. As an assistant you have taught a class up to 80?—Yes; I was once an assistant in a school half the size of the one I am in now, and my work there was just as hard as it is now.

786. Suppose you had Standard V. to teach, with 20 pupils, would you consider your work very much increased if you had to take double the number—40?—No, it would not be increased very much.

787. You would be able to perform your duties just the same?—Yes.

788. Do you think the pupils get on better when there is this greater competition, this feeling of emulation?—Yes.

789. Within a moderate limit you think that the numbers should be kept up?—Yes.

790. Do you approve of the system that is laid down in the suggested scale of paying teachers, both the headmaster and the staff assistants, according to the average attendance of the school?—No; I think that the roll basis is fairer. The attendance fluctuates, and is beyond the control of the teacher, and his salary suffers accordingly.

791. If this scale is adopted as it stands, and the Nelson schools remain as they are, what will be the effect on the salaries of the teachers?—We shall suffer considerably and unjustly.

792. Supposing all the schools were amalgamated into one central school, what would be the effect then?—I think each teacher, without exception, would receive an increase of salary.

793. Then, unless an alteration is made in the present method of education in Nelson, the teachers will suffer if a scheme of this kind is brought into operation?—Some would; others would benefit.

794. What class of teachers would benefit?—If the side-schools are considered as complete individual schools, then I think the teachers in those schools would benefit. The teachers of the central schools would suffer very considerably, and, as I think, very unfairly.

795. Do you think the number of pupil-teachers appointed by the Boards too many?—I think they are in excess; half the teachers in Nelson are pupil-teachers.

796. Do you think it is likely to bring about a state of congestion that will be prejudicial to teachers?—I think it will inevitably lead to that.

797. You are of the opinion that teachers should be paid according to their certificates, length of service, and other qualifications rather than according to the average attendance?—Yes; I think they should be paid according to the work which they do.

798. Do you consider that a teacher in a small school should possess the same ability as a teacher in a larger school?—Yes.

799. In that case, should there be equal pay for equal work?—Yes.

F. V. KNAPP, First Assistant Teacher, Boys' Central School.

*Mr. Knapp:* A great deal I intended to say has been already said, but there is one point I would like to bring before the Commission, though I do so with some diffidence. Under the regulations of the Nelson Board there are a number of teachers receiving a salary above the scale. In the scale the salary for the first assistant master at the Boys' Central School is £175 per annum. In other parts of the Nelson Education District there are several teachers paid according to the scale, but the assistants at the Boys' Central School are paid a salary, as I said before, in excess of the scale, owing to special circumstances. I would ask the Commission, in any recommendation they may make to the Department, that their recommendation will be made in such a way as not to lower the salaries of those teachers. I may say I served in a country school for three years as headmaster, and in a town school for seven years as headmaster. Owing to the amalgamation of schools, however, I was appointed first assistant master, at a salary of £200. Previously I had received under the Board's scale £225, so that I suffered a reduction not only in position, but in salary by £25; and I may say that there are other teachers in the service similarly situated.

800. *Mr. Hill.*] Did you receive house allowance?—No. I may say, with reference to the last appointment I had as headmaster of a town school, the average attendance had risen from 120 to 180, and there was every likelihood of it rising still higher, but owing to an unfortunate accident the school was burnt down. At the same time another school in the district was burnt down, and for that reason it was thought advisable to amalgamate the three schools into one. There is another suggestion I would make in reference to the peculiar position of our schools here containing pupils from the Third Standard upwards. Such schools might be compared to schools of a similar size in other districts, and be accounted as equivalent to schools with an attendance of 800 or 900, as the case may be.