

135. In your district does the one Board control the operations of the High School Board and primary education?—The one Board controls all forms of education in our district—primary education, secondary education, the district high schools, the Technical College, and all the technical schools, and it keeps in informal touch with the Girls' College too.

136. It has worked well and is working well: is that so?—I believe so. I believe there is a good deal of heart in the whole business.

137. Do you endorse the view advanced by the Southland Education Board, dealing with School Committee allowances?—I will read the statement to you, and I want to know if you approve, or, if not, in what respects you disagree. It is as follows—Section 34 (b), School Committees' allowances: The adoption of this clause will perpetuate the present extremely unfair method of providing for these allowances. A Dominion scale of allowances should be provided by the Government, for the following reasons: (1.) There is the same dissatisfaction now in some education districts because Committees in adjoining districts receive larger grants as there was formerly among teachers because their salaries were lower than those paid in adjoining districts. (2.) Boards controlling relatively great numbers of large schools can pay higher allowances than Boards controlling relatively great numbers of small schools. Small schools earn less in capitation than they receive in allowances, and this loss to the Board has to be made up from the profit on the large schools. Consequently the greater the number of large schools the greater the profit and the more liberally the smaller schools can be treated—e.g., adopting Southland's present scale, a school of twenty earns £6 and receives £11; a school of four hundred earns £120, and receives £73. (3.) The inequality and inadequacy of the grants lead at present to so much friction between Boards and Committees as to make administration difficult, and all this trouble would be obviated by the adoption of a Dominion scale, as now urged. (4.) The proposals in the Bill, instead of reducing these differences in grants, will increase them and also the difficulties of some of the Boards. (5.) Further, when allowances for administration and Committees are paid on a capitation basis, the cost of administration in a district with a large number of small schools is greater than in a district with the same attendance in fewer schools. Consequently, in the former the money available for Committees is much less than in the latter. (6.) The present time is opportune for the adoption of the proposed change by the Government, because the allowances are being increased by the Bill, and it will be found that a Dominion scale can be drawn up that will reduce the present allowances in very few instances. On the other hand, if the Bill is passed in its present form the opportunity may not occur again for many years?—I am quite in sympathy with that proposal, for this reason: I believe that a school in a remote district ought to be placed in as good a position as the best school in the best town. But perhaps if the districts are rearranged and made larger the difficulty might be got over then.

138. You are acquainted with the Southland District, and you are also acquainted with Otago. What would be the position under this Bill so far as the schools are concerned in our district as compared with Otago? In Otago they have large schools to a greater extent than we have—a greater number of large schools?—I believe that Otago has always been able to do more for its schools than Southland has been able to. I suppose that may to some extent be the explanation.

139. Would I be right in assuming that it means 6d. loss to Southland and only 2d. to Otago under this scheme, relatively speaking?—I am sorry to say that the spirit of accountancy has not been at all developed in me.

140. Would you approve of a scale of, say, 6s. 6d., instead of the suggested 6s.?—I have hardly been at an Education Board meeting where some Committee was not in dire straits—where some Committee has not asked tearfully and prayerfully for more assistance.

141. Under this Bill Southland would be in a worse condition than she is in to-day, as far as this clause is concerned—and your Board, too?—I should say that the Committees will not be very much better off, if any.

142. Will they not be worse?—I am not an accountant sufficiently strong to give a financial opinion.

143. What do you think about the twofold franchise for Education Boards and Committees?—I express the view of our local Schools Committees' Association. They think it is unfortunate. The Board says that it may lead to misunderstanding.

144. Do they regard it as an incongruity?—They do not regard it as a good thing. It does not matter what the basis of election is, let it be uniform. Have it simply on the ordinary electoral franchise, and make it uniform.

145. If you could have one day set apart for the local election of bodies, that would get over the difficulty: it would help, would it not?—Yes.

146. *Hon. Mr. Allen.*] Have you any idea of the cost of adopting a general roll?—No; but I understand it would be an expensive matter.

147. Do you know that it would approximate £20,000 every election year?—I was not aware that it would amount to that.

148. Do you think it would be wise to put £20,000 into that, or would you rather have it for the schools?—I should say, rather use it for the schools.

149. With regard to the District Councils: did I understand you to say that your Board do not think it necessary to have the District Council, because the Board could do all the work that a District Council would?—Yes, more particularly with the enlarged area. I should say that a Board is made up, as a rule, of intelligent, business, far-seeing men. That has been my experience. The members have, I should say, just as many qualifications as perhaps the men who compose such a Council as we have here.

150. Does not the Board control just one portion of education and not the whole?—In the first place, it is a subordinate body—subordinate to the Government and the Department—and in that sense it controls a part and not the whole.