

FREDERICK MARTYN RENNER, M.A., Senior English Master, Wellington College, and Hon. Secretary New Zealand Secondary Schools Assistants' Association, made a statement and was examined. (No. 35.)

*Witness:* I have here a statement which the executive of the New Zealand Secondary Schools Assistants' Association have prepared, and I will read it. It is as follows: The executive of the New Zealand Secondary Schools Assistants' Association begs to bring under the notice of the Education Committee and of members of Parliament the views and opinions of this association on the proposed Education Bill of 1914. While we admit that the Bill will be of some advantage to the male assistants of the smaller secondary schools, and to many of the female assistants in secondary schools for girls, we regret that no Dominion scale of salaries has been introduced. We regret still more that our association's salary scheme was not adopted by the Minister of Education. How necessary for us secondary teachers a Dominion scale is may be briefly illustrated as follows: (a.) Without a Dominion scale the secondary teacher has before him or her no definite promotion ladder. (b.) Even with £200 or £150 as the minimum salary for appointment, no inducement is under the present system offered to men and women to remain in the service. Again and again we have before us cases of men who find the chance of rising upwards so slight that they seek some other profession. We venture to say that fully three-quarters of the secondary-school teachers, particularly men with families, are forced to supplement their meagre incomes by taking outside work after school hours. Teachers claim to be professional men and women, but even senior teachers are paid salaries that are absurd remuneration for services rendered and ridiculous as professional remuneration, and yet we have heard it said that it is worth while paying almost any price for a good education. In secondary schools a young teacher (male) is usually appointed at £200 per annum. He can rise (if he remains) to £330 or perhaps to £350 at the outside, but in how many years? There are senior assistants with the highest qualifications who have taken twenty-five, thirty-three, and thirty-eight years to advance from £200 to £330. Contrast this with what obtains in primary schools. There a junior teacher commences at £100; by the new Bill he may possibly rise to £310 in a definite number of years. He more than trebles his initial salary, and reaches this maximum by definite annual increments within a stated time. We secondary teachers with a four-years university training behind us start later, rise by haphazard increases of now £5, now £10, with no definite promotion ladder before us, and when we reach the "sere and yellow leaf" have gained an average increment of £3 or £4 per year. Even then we do not get £330 or £350. We, say, have £20 towards superannuation, and, in addition, income-tax too. (c.) Again, there are some twenty-two secondary schools in New Zealand, and there are some 240 graduated assistants. What chance has a senior assistant of obtaining the position of principal even supposing the principal is chosen from among the 240? The cure for these unsatisfactory conditions above enumerated would be a Dominion scale. Such a scale as we advocated in our scheme would have meant an increased expenditure of £17,000 on secondary education—a little enough price to pay. Failing the introduction of that scheme, which we still hope will be considered—failing the introduction of a Dominion scale, then we would respectfully ask that the general average salary to be paid to male assistants—viz., £250—be raised to at least £300, and the general average of £175 in the case of female assistants be raised to at least £200. A comparison of what the cost would be (1) on the basis of £250 for males and £175 for females, (2) on the basis of £300 for males and £200 for females, is appended: Male assistants, 173; female assistants, 126. Under (1), total cost £66,300; under (2), total cost £77,100; increase, £10,800. This increase is only some £4,100 more than the estimated increase under the proposed Act, which is given as £6,677. We would, however, point out that even this increase—viz., £10,800—would hardly suffice to pay us on a professional basis. If it is not intended that we are to be classed as professional men and women then no more need be said.

There is a second way of looking at the cost of the respective schemes: (1.) In 1911 there were 4,021 free-place pupils, involving a total expenditure of £43,630: in other words, the cost to the Government per head was £10 17s. (2.) In 1914 there would be, say, 4,800 free-place pupils. If the proposed Bill were in operation the total expenditure would be £66,300. The cost to the Government per head would be £13 16s. (Note.—This amount of £66,300 will include the sum of £50,199 for 1912, the normal increase for the years 1913 and 1914, and the contemplated extra expenditure of £6,677.) (3.) In 1915 there would be, say, 5,200 free-place pupils. If our scheme were adopted—viz., £300 for males and £200 for females—it would cost £77,000. The cost to the Government per head would be £14 10s. I desire to mention, parenthetically, that Mr. Mahan, of the Auckland Grammar School, in giving evidence before the Education Commission, emphasized the fact that English experts declared in their reports that secondary-school education could not be adequately given unless the Government were prepared to spend £15 per head.

In any case we fail to see how the scale of payments in Schedule X will prove adequate enough for certain schools to pay salaries provided by the Bill. For example, a certain school, A, is in this position: Boys on roll as at 1st March, 1914, 454; salaries to be paid according to Bill, £5,675; salaries (total) as now paid, £5,275; increase in salaries demanded by Bill, £400. But the increase in grant yields only £385 from 385 free-place pupils at £1 per head. The Board must therefore find £15.

Another school (girls'), B, is in this position: Number on roll as at 1st March, 1914, 327; salaries to be paid according to Bill, £4,087 10s.; salaries (total) now paid, £3,170; increase in salaries demanded by Bill, £917 10s. Increase of grant yields £270 from 270 free-place pupils at £1 per head. The Board must find £647 10s.

In a third school, C, which is one of the smaller secondary schools, the improvement is to this effect: £200 divided among nine teachers.