

would have made for economy, and also for efficiency of teaching. In a large city like Auckland we have these mixed schools dotted all over the place, and we believe that if we had had schools in a variety of places taking possibly only children from Standards IV, V, and VI, it would make for efficiency of teaching in those schools, and for economy as far as the Consolidated Fund is concerned. If we have power only to establish a separate infant school when the number reaches 161 we would then be faced with this condition of affairs: that within that area are a very large number of children, probably many hundreds, who would under ordinary circumstances attend Standards IV, V, and VI of a fully mixed school. If, on the other hand, we had power to establish, when the number reached fifty, an infant school, we would have established it within that area; and by the time it reaches 161 custom would have sanctioned its use and would have enabled us to continue on in that way. We feel that if this power is granted a very large number of educational problems will be solved. In the first place we are satisfied that if you can get in Standard VI eighty or one hundred children, in Standard V from eighty to one hundred and twenty, and in Standard IV from ninety to one hundred and thirty, these children would be very much more efficiently taught than at present. We think the present system of schools is acting very injuriously indeed on the really able children of the community; and we feel that in the large centres it ought to be possible to group these children together in such a way as to enable the classes to be subdivided with some reference to the attainments and capacity of the pupils. In a city like Auckland there would be five or six schools teaching only Standards IV, V, and VI, and there would also be a large number of infant schools, staffed by capable women teachers, on a separate scale of staffing and salaries entirely. Some years ago I brought this matter up at the Inspectors' Conference, and the underlying principle was carried by a large majority. So I hope our Board will be given the power to establish a separate infant school when the minimum average attendance reaches fifty-one. I am distinctly of opinion that the proposal will be in the true interests of education. Finally, I would say that the Auckland Education Board is thoroughly in accord with the underlying principle of this Bill, but it wishes to strongly protest against the clause which subdivided the district.

5. I will ask Mr. Purdie one question—whether the Auckland Education Board favours the centralization of the inspectorate?—I think that the Auckland Board would acquiesce in the proposal. They raised no objection. But had the question been put to them plainly they would have said, No, they would rather not centralize.

6. *Mr. Sidey.*] I understood you to state that the Auckland Board has given up the power of appointing teachers?—Practically. Nominally, we do appoint teachers. We have a grading scheme, and the teachers are shifted almost automatically from the graded list, which is formulated by the Inspectors and not by the members of the Board. The position is generally advertised, and the teacher highest on the graded list gets offer. The decision is then sent on to the Committee, and unless they see serious objection that person is appointed.

7. Do you submit one name to the Committee?—Just one.

8. Do you advertise every vacancy?—As a rule.

9. And select from those who apply?—Yes.

10. You have seen the proposals with regard to the appointment of teachers?—Yes.

11. Are you satisfied with them?—Yes, generally. They further curtail the powers of the Board. At the present time we voluntarily give up the power of appointment, but under the Bill we have to do so compulsorily; and I may say from a wide experience of education I think it is a very wise provision. It is distinctly better that an expert body of men should appoint the teachers rather than that men elected on Committees who really know very little about these matters should make the appointment.

12. Do you consider that the provisions of the Bill will prevent your doing what you are doing at present?—Practically, the matter will be in exactly the same position; only it makes it incumbent on us to do what we are now doing voluntarily.

13. You are aware that there is a little discretion allowed in the case of Inspectors who have to consider the case of teachers with equal qualifications?—We have never come across a case in which they have absolutely equal qualifications.

14. You think that that provision is likely to remain a dead-letter in practice?—I think it ought to, as we hardly want to make it applicable on all occasions.

15. With regard to the election of Boards, is your Board satisfied with the alteration proposed?—Yes.

16. Does your Board see any objection in the fact that one portion of the Board is elected on one method, and another portion is elected on an entirely different basis?—I do not know. Very likely they have considered this particular matter. I gathered as much from the expressions of the opinions of the members, and that they considered it a very grave danger if you based the election on the municipal franchise, because some person might get on the Board who would otherwise be undesirable, and under other conditions would not be elected.

17. Is your Board in a position to express an opinion as to whether this is an improvement on the old system under which one portion of the district is one constituency and another portion another constituency?—I see your point; but the question is that if you have an urban-school area the number of School Committees within that area would be so small that there would be almost no electors, or very few, and there might be only one member to elect. So it seems to me desirable that the franchise should be on a wider basis. That being the case, the only solution is to bring in the municipal franchise.

18. Do you think that these urban-school areas are likely to be very small?—I think they would have jurisdiction over a large number of schools.

19. At any rate, there is no objection raised to the proposal by your Board?—None: I think the Board would be generally favourable.