

33. We might have a lot of very deserving men grading at country schools who would be fit to come in at £500 and work up and get to the Inspector of small schools, but there are country schools to which you could send an Assistant Inspector?—We cannot agree with you on that point at all. When a man is fit to be an Inspector he should get the minimum salary of £500.

HENRY HILL, Chief Inspector of Schools, Hawke's Bay, examined. (No. 10.)

*Witness:* I should like to express my views as to the inspectorate, though I would prefer that you should ask me questions on the subject. Personally, I have always been in favour of the centralization of the inspectorate. I perhaps have had the longest experience among the Inspectors, as I started my work following the passing of the Education Act in 1877. I have attended every Conference since that time, and at each Conference I believe I have proposed the centralization of the inspectorate. Personally I congratulate Mr. Hogben—I believe it has been his idea, although I have never spoken to him on the subject—I congratulate Mr. Hogben and the Minister of Education upon inserting this provision in the Bill that is before the Committee to-day.

1. *Mr. J. C. Thomson.*] What are your reasons for favouring the centralization of the inspectorate?—Because I believe it will add to the efficiency of education very materially. I am against uniformity; I oppose uniformity entirely—the greater the differentiation in our school-work the better our schools will be, in my opinion; but the centralization of the inspectorate will enable us to bring matters into a better form of government in the way of getting a general system of classification of our teachers. I myself look upon it as a stepping-stone to the generalized classification of the teachers throughout the Dominion, and it is one of those things that personally I have spent a good deal of time in studying. I may say that I quite agree with all that Mr. Fleming has said; it was only on the question of the inspectorate that I wished to speak, especially when Mr. Fleming and Mr. Gow said so pointedly that they were against the centralization of the inspectorate. I myself am entirely in favour of it, and hope it will be carried out. I think the Inspectors, as has been well said, have been too modest in their requests, because the position which they occupy is such as to warrant, to my mind, the very best salary it is possible to give to the profession.

2. *Mr. Sidey.*] You speak for yourself, of course?—Only myself.

3. You said you were opposed to uniformity?—Yes.

4. But you are not opposed, are you, to uniformity of standard passes—I mean, for the purposes of obtaining, say, a certificate of competency or a certificate of proficiency?—Yes. I think a certificate of proficiency in country schools could be more adapted to the needs of a country school. Every child, under the requirements, has to pass through and get the same departmental standard, taking the same subjects.

5. You are aware that there are certain positions, say in the Railway Department, that are offered to applicants who have passed, say, the Fifth or the Sixth Standard?—Yes.

6. Is it not desirable that there should be the same standard required right throughout New Zealand?—In the case of those who desire to enter the Railway Department they would prepare those subjects in the same way as a lawyer will prepare the subjects that are required for a lawyer.

7. No, there are no special subjects at all; they simply take the school certificate?—But you could have the same standard of equality. It is not necessary to have the same subjects.

8. I do not think you quite understand what I mean. Supposing a pupil applies from Canterbury and another one from Otago to get into the Railway service; they both produce a certificate showing that they have passed the Fifth Standard. Is it not desirable that the qualifications of these two boys should be the same?—It is possible for them to be the same and yet for the boys to have passed different examinations. In this way: if the Department say the following subjects are required—

9. They do not make any stipulation whatever as to subjects?—Then I say it is just as likely, with the essential subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic, for a boy to be as well qualified in the country without taking other subjects as a boy in the town. I want to make it clear that the country need not have the same subjects as the town, and yet have the same standard of efficiency.

10. *Mr. Hogben.*] In a word, you want full liberty of programme for the children, but you want at the same time, as far as you can show it by certificate, equality of mental capacity?—That is exactly the position.

ALEXANDER L. WYLLIE, Chief Inspector of Schools, Southland, examined. (No. 11.)

*Witness:* The case of an Inspector who has accepted a position at £325 has been mentioned. I do not know whether Southland is referred to or not, but it has occurred in Southland at any rate, and I simply want to state the circumstances. I am in a position to know that neither the one appointed at £325 nor the one appointed at £375 would have applied for the positions unless they had known that a Bill of the sort that is now before the Committee was going to be introduced this session, and they applied for those positions, actually losing money on their present salaries—in the one case at least—in the hope and assurance that this Committee would put things right.

1. *Mr. McCallum.*] Were they teachers?—They were teachers. The one appointed at £325 had a salary and allowance equal to £375. He applied for the position at £325.