

8. You think that owing to the action of certain Boards it is absolutely necessary those clauses should be there?—Yes.

9. You do not approve of the positions being left entirely open to the discretion of the Boards?—Yes, we would approve of that if we could depend upon the local Boards, but we cannot depend upon them.

10. You think it is absolutely necessary to safeguard those positions for women teachers?—Yes, in the interests of the schools.

11. And not in the interests of the teachers?—For both.

12. *Mr. Hanan.*] Are you satisfied with the assurance you have received in regard to (d) and (e)?—Yes, I am satisfied on that point.

13. What is the other point you stressed?—We want two places in schools of Grades VIIA and VIIB. After the 5, 5, we want 4, 4.

HELEN BIRSS examined. (No. 13.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What party are you representing before the Committee?—I am appearing here on behalf of the Southland District Educational Institute, and I have also been asked to represent the North Canterbury District women's organization. On behalf of the women's organizations of North Canterbury and Southland I have to thank the Minister of Education for allotting seats to women on the proposed Council of Education, and also for making women Inspectors. It was a reform that the majority looked forward to with hope, but with little certainty of accomplishment. If the Minister of Education in bringing in this Bill had also brought in a grading scheme it would, I believe, have been, if not better, at least as well received as the proposed increase in salaries. Perhaps there is no necessity so great at the present time as the necessity for a Dominion grading scheme, and much regret has been expressed that such a scheme is not attached to the proposed Bill, in order that the present illogical and irrational method of promotion might be done away with. That the final decision in the choice of a teacher is still left with Committees is somewhat of a surprise, as any one interested in education must be well aware of the curious and strange ways that Committees too often have of reaching a final decision—as, for example, the members of a country Committee some six weeks ago, with the names and attainments of three candidates before them, two of high classification, one much lower, and not knowing which to choose, put the names in a hat and, as luck would have it, drew the name of the teacher possessing the lowest qualifications. However, they were afterwards induced to decide afresh, as they were shown this new method was illegal. It is far from surprising, in view of the haphazard way in which promotions are made, that teachers are dissatisfied. Therefore, while congratulating the Minister of Education on the undoubted good points in the Bill, may I, on behalf of the Southland Educational Institute and the North Canterbury Women's Association, point out some defects that we hope will be remedied in order that a greater measure of justice may be given to all. First, that Grade IIIB (81–120) might be included in IVA, so that Grade IV would read for salary purposes 81–240, with subdivisions for staffing purposes as at present proposed. The salary allotted to Grade III is £200 to £250, and a large number of teachers, married men with families, remain in this grade for sixteen and twenty years with little hope of promotion. This class of school should be made more attractive than the third-assistantship in large town schools, the salary of which under the proposed scale is £230–£250. The work of the school from 80–120 requires greater skill and powers of organization than is needed for the teaching of a standard, and in many cases only parts of a standard. The Minister of Education, in addressing a deputation of assistants, explained that country schools must be made more attractive than town assistantships: here is certainly room for improvement. Separate schools: It seems somewhat of an anomaly that a separate scale should exist for boys', girls', and infant schools. One would have thought that it was only in semi-civilized countries that girls were undervalued, but here we have the old fallacy cropping up again. Surely there never was a time when so much has been heard of the value of the education of the child and of the girl, and to pay the women teachers allotted to these positions a salary largely inferior when exactly the same work is demanded is to lower the value and self-respect of the teacher. Our New Zealand Educational Institute is in entire agreement with us in asking that there shall be one scale of salaries of boys, girls, and infants, and the Institute last week passed a motion to this effect and carried it unanimously—at last a step in the right direction of equal pay for equal work. In the proposed Education Bill the grading of assistants in Grade VII schools should be consecutive—7, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3—for the first six positions, and in schools of Grade VIA it should run—6, 5, 4, 4. The proposed Bill, while not lowering the status of the first woman assistant, assigns to her the salary of a third assistant. Under the present Education Bill the first woman assistant is classified in the majority of education districts as second assistant, and paid as second assistant. Why, when the majority of Education Boards now rank and pay her as second assistant, why should the framers of the present Education Bill assign to the highest and most responsible woman in these high-grade schools the salary of third assistant? Ninety per cent. of the women who hold second-assistantships to-day are heads of large infant departments controlling from three hundred to four hundred children. They have pupil-teachers and junior assistants to train and overlook, and where there is no training-school this is no light work. They have the sewing of the upper standard girls and the supervision of the sewing of the school. The third assistant is usually a young man of small experience, who takes this position to gain experience in class-teaching. It is the best a woman can ever attain. The proposed Education Act materially improves the salaries of head teachers and first assistants. Why, seeing that from three teachers in high-grade schools extra work is demanded, should only the first two be given salaries commensurate with their responsi-