

have one Inspector in Blenheim. If the Board were at Nelson not only would at least six days a month of the members and Inspectors' time be taken up, but the expenses would have to be paid by the Department. The members would have to travel a good deal over the country to get even a smattering of information in regard to the outlying localities, and even then the efficiency of the present system could not be maintained. Nelson as the centre would be quite impracticable as to the time occupied in getting there and back as well as the question of expense. As I have said, it will always be necessary to have at least one Inspector in Blenheim, but, if a week out of every month is taken up by going to Nelson, more than one Inspector would be wanted for the Marlborough work. The cost of inspection and administration would be much increased if the Board was abolished, and the efficiency of the work impaired. The natural features of the country suggest that the west coast, with its railways from the Otira mountains to Nelson, should either be worked from Nelson or a centre on that coast, while the limits of the district containing the east coast and Sounds should not cross the dividing range separating Marlborough from Nelson. I can discover no other purpose in the change than that of giving teachers a greater scope for promotion. This our Board recognises is essential to the efficiency of education; but by giving the General Council, or the Minister on the Council's advice, the appointment of teachers, after reference to the Committees, the object would be completely attained instead of only partially as under the Bill as it now stands. Our teachers do not go to Nelson for promotion, but two of our Inspectors have come from Nelson. Most of our teachers come from the North Island, but that is not reciprocated.

3. Does not your information come from your Inspectors?—No, not entirely from the Inspector. The Inspector has over one hundred schools to visit, and we rely to a great extent upon the Board members.

4. *Mr. Poland.*] Your Board is unanimous in objecting to the abolition of the present Board?—Yes, quite unanimous.

5. *Mr. Hanan.*] Can you tell me how many children are attending your High School?—One hundred and twenty.

6. And how many teachers?—The principal, Dr. Innes, and four others. None of them are below the grade of M.A., and one M.A., M.Sc.

7. What is the cost of running the High School?—About £1,414, exclusive of expenditure on buildings.

8. Would it follow that if your Board is wiped out the small schools would be closed?—No, but their efficiency would be very much impaired, and that is most important.

9. In what way would the efficiency of the school suffer by reason of the Board being abolished?—Because a Board at such a great distance away as Nelson or Wellington would not get sufficient information.

10. What kind of information?—The information relating to the small schools and the localities.

11. Could not this information you refer to be obtained through the Inspector?—Yes, but it would not be obtained—it would be done without, to the detriment of education.

12. How often do the members of the Board visit those localities?—I do not know. One of our prominent members has a residence in the Sounds, and he is up and down Queen Charlotte Sound very frequently.

13. What is the special information regarding a school which is necessary for its administration which cannot be obtained from the Inspector?—There is very little except that the Inspector could not be there as often as the members of the Board. You would require two Inspectors instead of one. The Inspector visits each country school twice a year, and only on urgent matters could he make an additional visit. He would not have time with the means of travelling available.

14. Would you not prefer that your district be associated with Canterbury?—No, I think it would be absurd.

15. You prefer Nelson?—No, I think that would be preposterous.

16. Would you prefer Wellington?—If it were necessary. If the Marlborough District were abolished it would be less detrimental to our small schools to attach us to Wellington than to either Nelson or Canterbury.

17. In the event of a change or alteration, what is your choice so far as being associated with any particular Board is concerned?—Certainly Wellington. It is not open to question.

18. If that is so, how comes it that you make such a strong point about the supervision of your schools when you really desire a Board at a greater distance than Nelson to supervise you?—It is not the distance—it is the time it takes to get there and back: it is the accessibility.

19. What is the objection to Canterbury?—That it is too far off. You would have to go to Wellington and then take the steamer to Lyttelton.

20. In what way is the education of the children of your district going to suffer if the change is made?—By all the circumstances that have been detailed. And many of the schools are difficult to get to and from, as well as expensive.

21. You recognise that your cost of administration per cent. is pretty high?—Yes, but the cause of that is that there are so many little schools. There are forty-two grade O schools and 190 children attending them.

22. And the average is what?—4.4.

23. What large schools have you in your electorate?—Our largest school is at Blenheim, and the average attendance is over 500. The next is Picton, with an attendance of 239.

24. How many schools have you in your district with an average attendance of over 200?—Two—Picton and Blenheim.

25. Are you satisfied with the boundaries as they are?—Yes.