

Service Commissioners took charge they have evidently made the conditions much better in the Civil Service. I can instance one case. The Commissioner, in advertising for telegraph runners, stated that if a youth paid a certain amount of attention to telegraphy he would get an increase in salary; and if he passed the Junior Civil Service Examination at a later date he could go on advancing, and by the age of twenty-eight receive £220 a year. We are in competition with such conditions as those, and the result is that men are not entering the teaching profession as they should. We think that we might attract men into the profession if we gave them a better starting salary. Now, many of those concerned in this £130 a year are engaged in small country schools, and it must be admitted, of course, that a percentage of those teachers are perhaps earning as much as they are entitled to; but we wish to look at the matter from the point of view of the child, too. Should not a child in a country district receive as great benefits from the education system as a child in a town district? I think he should; and consequently a better class of teacher should be provided for those schools. Another reason why a minimum of £130 should be granted is this: training-college students are those who have to take these lower positions. They have spent five years at least in training—two or three years as a pupil-teacher, and then two years at least in a training college. They have strenuous work, having to pass various examinations, and their allowance is at the rate of £30 a year during their time of training. Of course, they are getting their training at the cost of the State, but if they had not parents who could afford to support them during that time we should not even get the number of men in the training colleges that we have at the present time. We think that on leaving the training college they should receive a salary of something like £130 a year, so as to make up for those lean years of training. In this way the child of the country school would benefit as well as the teacher. Then, again, the expense of living in the country districts is very great—quite as great as in town. In the country food products are very expensive. I was told of a case only the other day where in one of the backblock districts kerosene is twice the price that it is in town. Then if a teacher wishes to go into the nearest township or town the expense of travelling is very great. And there are other items. I should now like to draw your attention to page 6. The Institute proposes, for salaries only, certain amendments of the schedule to the Bill. The Bill provides for three grades—the first 9–20, the second 21–35, and the third grade 36–80. The Institute suggests that the first grade be 9–20, as in the Bill; the second grade 21–30, instead of 21–35; and the third grade 31–80. These suggested grades are for salaries only, and not for staffing. The point here is that we wish to place schools of average attendance 31–35 in the third grade, so reducing the number of schools in Grade II, and adding ninety-six schools in Grade III at the higher salary. It is admitted on all hands that schools between 31–35 are very difficult schools to teach. There is only one teacher, and he is generally in charge of all the standards. It was felt that a man in that position is doing practically as much work and as good work as the man in Grade III who has a school of, say, forty, for the man in Grade III with a school of forty has an assistant, and consequently the work of the headmaster is cut down to a great extent. These schools also are the very small country schools; and here again, if those schools are placed in the new Grade III suggested by the Institute for salaries alone, the people of those districts will secure a better-paid man, and consequently a man who ought to be more experienced. Then the cry from the backblocks that the children of the pioneering settlers are not receiving the education that they ought to receive would not be heard so much. It seems to me that in a scheme where the salaries depend upon the average attendance there must always be blocks in the scale. There is a block between Grade III and Grade IV, and then again between Grade IV and Grade V—a sort of dead wall. I might explain it in this way: In Grade III under the Bill there are 508 headmasters; in Grade IVa there are 115; and what I mean by the block is that those 508 head teachers have very little chance of promotion, for there are only 115 positions open for them in the various schools throughout the Dominion. 508 head teachers are waiting for 115 positions.

5. *Mr. Hogben.*] IVa is misquoted. IVa has 121 to 160. Those 115 schools are all in the same grade as the 508?—From IIIa, 26–80, there are 508. Yes, I see there is a misprint. I am referring to IIIB grade, to those schools of from 36 to 80, and the schools of 121–180. What I mean by the block is this that there are 508 headmasters in schools of Grade IIIa and 115 in schools of Grade IIIB, which is 81–120. The block occurs between IIIB and IVa.

6. In IIIB there are 118 schools, and in IVa there are 89 schools?—Yes. Well, the suggestion of the Institute is that at present there are 508 headmasters in 36–80 and 115 in 81–120, and all to receive the same salary under the Bill. The proposal is to delete Grade IIIB and place the 115 schools in the grade above, making in all 165 schools in that grade, instead of 50 as I have here, or instead of 89 as Mr. Hogben has just pointed out. The Institute suggests that the Grade V, at present 240–400, should be 201–400. That will include schools between 201 to 240, which are marked IVc. The desire is to put those into Grade Va, and give them the higher salary. The effect would be to take thirty-six schools out of Grade IVc and place them in Grade Va. It will be seen that in the Grade Vb the headmasters of those schools only get a rise of £10 on their maximum under the Bill, while the assistants get no increases at all.

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FRIDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1914.

ALBERT ERSKINE continued his statement and was examined. (No. 38.)

*Witness:* Just before the Committee adjourned at their last meeting I was discussing the table on page 6 of our statement setting out the grades of schools in the Bill and the grades of schools suggested by the Institute as far as salaries are concerned. The table was not set out in the detail that