

schools—I ask, will the Bill induce town assistants—the class of teacher most favourably situated for making himself efficient—will the Bill induce such to go into the country? I say it will not. It will not pay a senior town assistant to take a new Grade III school in the country at a salary of £200 to £250, and the ordinary two-teacher country schools are all in this grade; nor, owing to the keen competition for new Grade IV schools, will his chance of getting into a school of this grade be other than remote. I say the Bill will not induce town assistants to seek service in the country. First assistants (Grade VII), £290 to £310; second assistants (Grade VI), £260 to £280: clearly these will not seek positions in the country worth £250 plus a house. Third assistants (Grade V), £230 to £250: I do not believe that the undeniable charms of a country schoolhouse will have sufficient attractions for even the Grade V town assistant to make him forsake the pleasures of city life, especially when it is remembered that he is probably improving himself by attending a university, or adding to his income by coaching or other work for which there is no demand in the country. With regard to the position of teachers in present Grade V, head teachers in present Grade V are very hardly dealt with in the Bill, for not only do we get less than others under the Bill, but I believe I am correct in saying we get less than others in 1908. (1.) The average salary in present Grade V schools is unaltered by the Bill, for though the maximum salary is raised £10 the minimum is lowered £10. Of course, the lowering of the minimum does not affect the present teachers in the grade. (2.) There are 118 present Grade V schools. Half the head teachers in this grade are now at the top of their grade—many of them have been so for years. In the Bill these receive one increment of £10, and are then again at the top of their grade, new Grade III. They have plodded up to their present position by annual increments of £5; there they will remain, for the most part, and watch the lower-grade men overhaul them by annual increments of £10. Thus, in effect, they are disgraced. (3.) It may be objected that this same state of things obtains in the higher grades also. This is quite true; but there is this great point of difference: the new Grade III teacher is marooned on a barren coast and sees penury staring him in the face; the new Grade IV teacher is settled on a comparatively fertile spot, where he can make shift to live in decent comfort. The one exists; the other can get a reasonable amount of enjoyment out of life. New Grade III head teachers have, as I showed before, practically no chance of further promotion; they are stranded at £280 (including house allowance), with no incentive whatever to further effort other than a sense of duty. Here I may be met with the objection that by improving his certificate a teacher may fit himself for a position in any of the grades above him. There are two practical difficulties that operate against a teacher in present Grade V doing this: first, the majority—I think I may say the great majority—of men in this grade are men well up in years and consequently unfitted for a course of study; and, second, their duties are such that, even if they were of an age to study, they could not devote the necessary time to it without neglecting their work in their schools. (4.) The average increase provided for in the new Bill is £23 9s. The head teachers of present Grade V will not receive half this amount. With regard to a remedy, the remedy I suggest will not cure the complaint from which the profession is suffering—namely, malnutrition, as I think the Medical Inspectors put it—but it will bring much-needed relief to a considerable number. New Grade III is a very large grade, with 623 schools. New Grade IV, with 122 schools, is a small grade. Take present Grade V of 118 schools out of new Grade III and include it in new Grade IVa, making a total of 240. But perhaps it will be asked, will not this add materially to the cost of the scheme? Undoubtedly it will, but it will give you a much more efficient average teacher to teach the bulk of your children, and that is what I am here to advocate. It will enable about a hundred head teachers to receive a maximum of £310 who without this change would have practically no hope of ever advancing beyond £250. When one considers the salaries paid in, say, the Post and Telegraph service, surely this is no extravagant demand for us teachers to make. In the true interests of education in New Zealand the salary of the average teacher must be raised, and the alteration I propose would be a decided step in that direction. Professor Findlay, who lately visited this city, said it was a matter to be regretted that women are gradually ousting men from the teaching profession because we will not pay men sufficient salaries. This was the position in the United States, he said, and it was a most deplorable one. I need not tell you that this is rapidly becoming the position in New Zealand. I notice in the Press report of Professor Findlay's lecture that the Minister of Education expressed the hope that some of the reforms advocated by the distinguished lecturer would be effected during the present session. Would it be presumption on my part to express the hope that the payment of a better salary to the average teacher may be one of these reforms? I have here, and should like to place before the Committee, extracts from a large number of letters that I have received from all over New Zealand in connection with this matter—letters that show how widespread is the dissatisfaction with the salaries proposed in the Bill so far as they affect present Grade V. A West Coast headmaster writes, "I taught a Grade IV school for seventeen years, and now that I am hoping for something better it seems that I am to remain as a Grade IV. I have a wife and three children to support." A Nelson headmaster says, "Our Institute carried a motion to have Grade V (present) placed in Grade IV: the Nelson Education Board also forwarded a similar resolution to the Government." The head teacher of a Wanganui school writes, "I have been twenty-eight years in my present position, and have self, wife, and five children to keep." A Manawatu headmaster says, "Here am I after twenty-nine years of service, eleven spent here, to get a rise of £10 and then can get no further, as promotion from Grade III (new) will be worse than difficult. On £250 I am to keep a wife and four children in a manner befitting my supposed position." A Taranaki headmaster puts his case succinctly, "I have twenty-seven years' service—thirteen years in my present position—and no chance of promotion." A West Coast headmaster writes, "I have been for thirty-three years headmaster of this school, and my present salary is at least £50 less than when I first took charge. Being a small district there was no chance of promotion." A Canterbury headmaster writes, "The miserable treatment meted out to Grade V is the outstanding feature of the whole salary question." An Otago headmaster says, "Our grade is certainly