

88. Have we complaints throughout the district of insufficient contingency money?—Yes, a number of complaints have been received. The Board have two rather serious ones under consideration now.

89. Where?—Christchurch East and Oxford East.

90. What would be, in your opinion, the effect of a reduction in the incidental grant?—It would depend, of course, on the amount taken away.

91. Supposing there was an appreciable amount taken off the incidental allowances, what would happen?—I think most of the Committees would find themselves in great difficulties to meet expenses.

92. I believe it is true that our incidental allowances are considerably greater than those given in Otago?—Yes.

93. But, notwithstanding that, do you see your way to a reduction of the incidental allowance to these various schools?—I do not think so. The Board took 5 per cent. off fifteen months ago, and several Committees wrote saying it was impossible for them to continue to meet the expenses of the schools, and at the Board's next meeting a deputation will come to ask the Board to go through the Committee's accounts and check off the expenditure, to ascertain whether their contention is not correct.

94. Your account shows the deficiency of the Board to be £2,604 9s. 4d.: how is that, in your opinion, to be met?—Supposing the Board received the amount proposed by the department?

95. Yes?—I do not know how it could be met.

96. You have read the scale of staffing?—Yes.

97. How will that work, generally speaking, in North Canterbury?—As I said before, some of the teachers will benefit, others will not. Generally speaking, the Board's scale would soon work into this. But a large number of the payments are faulty in this scale.

98. What is your opinion as to the several sums placed against the various items of attendance—salaries?—I do not think that the basis of the adjustment of salaries is altogether sound in this scale.

99. In what way is it not sound?—You will notice that a mistress in a school of 35 receives £80, and that she receives no increase at all until the school reaches an average of 75. Then, again, the salary mentioned here for a mistress in the country is £80, and that amount is also given for junior assistants in the towns. I think if that sum is sufficient for the former it is too much for the junior positions in the towns.

100. What do you say with regard to the proposed salaries of the infant mistresses, head-mistresses, first and second assistants?—What strikes me with regard to the second group, dealing with assistants, is that the salary of the first assistant master is very much in excess of the salary of the second assistant master.

101. What do you suggest?—It is just a matter of money. One is undoubtedly too low, but I would not like to say that the first is too high. I think they should be equalised a little more nearly.

102. What do you think with regard to the relative salaries of the third and fourth female assistants?—That would be the same position.

103. Are they fair relatively?—No, not quite so, I think. I fancy that a third assistant mistress, after starting in a school at 175, should get some increase before an average of 390, as shown here. She would work at £80 a year all the time, and would never get an increase at all.

104. Have you considered the position of infant mistresses and headmistresses under this scale?—Under this scale the salaries are equal.

105. Is the principle for one or the other an unsound one?—The Board has always taken it that there should be some difference in the salaries. There are only four large schools in that group. In the Board's opinion the one should be larger than the other.

106. In this proposed scale has overstaffing been considered, do you think?—Of course, I do not know whether the framers of the scale have considered the question.

107. Does overstaffing involve a considerable item in North Canterbury?—Under this scale overstaffing would be very large indeed.

108. Why?—The introduction of a mistress at 35 at £80 would, under this scale, lead to a large amount of overstaffing. Committees would manage to get the attendance up to 36 and apply for the mistress, and then the average might go down, and you could not get her out under nine or ten months. Then there is the introduction of a pupil-teacher at 75. A pupil-teacher cannot very well be removed after having been once appointed, and the average might go down to 65, and there would be overstaffing there. Then there would be overstaffing in the case of the appointment of the next assistant mistress at 100. It is in the small schools that overstaffing mounts up. In the very large schools the proportion is quite different.

109. What does the present overstaffing and relieving cost the Board?—Well, the Board has for some time past been very careful in the matter of staffing, and has kept it down very strictly. At the present time there is not much overstaffing for more than two quarters. I think the overstaffing and the relieving usually run to £500 or £600 per annum. Under this scale it would more nearly approach £1,000.

110. The proposed scale, if carried, would necessitate the introduction of 458 teachers?—I think so.

111. Where are they to come from? Have we many disengaged teachers in Canterbury?—Not in that proportion, I think. Of course, at this time of the year the students from the Normal School would increase the number; but I think forty male and female teachers, including the ex-students, would be about the number.

112. Do you think that 458 teachers could be readily found in the colony to fill these vacancies?—I think, if they could be found, the want of employment in other centres must be very much worse than it is in North Canterbury.