

8. There was a report in the paper this morning from Dunedin, which I did not understand, that there they are prepared to accept fifty-five as the retiring-age?—Yes. Well, I am very much surprised. I think it can be explained by the fact that, as far as I have seen, the women teachers of Dunedin allow their affairs to be managed by the men teachers. I have gathered that impression. I gathered it first of all at the time the Teachers' Salaries Commission was sitting, and I gathered it again on the two occasions upon which I acted as a delegate to the New Zealand Educational Institute.

9. You say that it is not the women teachers' own individual opinion then—it is an influenced opinion?—I think it is a little influenced. I should be glad to be shown that it is not so, but I have an impression that they have been told that the Bill will not pass unless they agree to the retiring-age being fifty-five.

10. You have had considerable experience as a woman teacher, no doubt, and you will be able to tell us what your opinion is with regard to the capacity in teaching of a woman beyond the age of fifty?—I can only tell you that from personal observation. I see very few women teaching who are over the age of fifty—very few seem to be able to remain in the service.

11. Will you just explain why? Is it because they get married?—No. I think they become unfit for their work.

12. They become unfit for their work after fifty?—Yes; many of them suffer from nervous strain.

13. *Mr. Hall.*] Are you speaking now for the teachers of Wellington only, or for those of the whole Educational District of Wellington?—I will explain how I come to be here. When we knew that the Bill was to be introduced into the House, at very short notice I was urged to call a meeting of women teachers. There being very little time, and it being impossible to arrange for the country teachers to attend, I called a meeting of the women teachers of the city and suburban schools. A committee was elected at that meeting, and, subsequently, that same committee appointed Miss Craig and myself to appear before this Committee as witnesses. But in the meantime a meeting was held at the Clyde Quay School, and I spoke there on lines similar to those on which I have spoken this morning. There were a great number of women teachers there—both country teachers and city teachers, and I found none who disagreed with me. Moreover, every Saturday morning I am in the habit of meeting some country teachers, and they have all agreed with me with regard to this question of the retiring-age.

14. You feel satisfied, therefore, that you are expressing the feeling of most of the teachers of the district?—I think there is no doubt whatever about that.

15. *Hon. Sir W. J. Steward.*] Were the compromises that you suggested as possible discussed at the meeting to which you referred. Were they suggested there?—They were discussed at the committee meeting.

16. Then you think that the suggestions you have made would be approved by the women teachers of this district?—Yes, I feel sure they would be.

17. *Mr. Sidey.*] I would like to know whether the women teachers have considered any other suggestions that have been made in the direction of strengthening the fund—that is to say, have the women teachers considered any proposal for strengthening the fund if greater burdens are put on it than are contemplated in the Bill?—You mean by additional contributions?

18. No, what I referred to was this: It is proposed to bring down another Bill increasing the teachers' salaries?—Yes.

19. It was suggested that a number of, at any rate, the older teachers would be prepared to forego at all events for some time, the increases which are contemplated to be given, and that these increases might in the meantime be applied towards strengthening this fund. Have the women teachers considered this matter at all?—We have not considered it, because we consider we know so little of the financial aspect of the question.

20. Do you think that the women teachers would be likely to fall in with any suggestion of the kind?—I think they would.

21. *Mr. Fowlds.*] Of course you have not made any attempt to calculate the cost?—No; we have not the data to do it.

22. When you say that the scheme is good for new entrants rather than those who are old and are likely to retire soon, is it not a fact that those retiring soon will get a greater benefit for the amount of their contributions than those who are in and pay for the full time?—Yes; but I said it was good for those retiring immediately and for new entrants.

23. And where is it that it comes to be objectionable?—Only, as far as I am concerned, with regard to the age. That is the only objection of the women to the scheme.

24. That is the only objection that you have?—Yes.

25. *Mr. Buddo.*] You stated in your evidence that you believed many women teachers became too nervous to continue their duties; that the nervous strain was too much for them. And you said, I think, that there were very few women teachers in the service over the age of fifty?—Yes.

26. Do you know of your own knowledge of any who have been obliged to retire from the teaching profession by reason of their failure to continue to bear the nervous strain imposed on them?—Yes.

27. You know of such cases?—Yes, I do.

28. Have those persons entered into any other business after retiring from the service?—No.

29. The nervous strain has practically put them out of work?—Yes.

30. *The Chairman.*] Does your suggestion mean in effect that a woman should be allowed to retire at fifty, as if she were medically unfit? Would it meet your views if she were allowed to retire at fifty as if she were medically unfit under the Act?—I am not very sure what that second subsection of clause 13 means. I have said that I thought it was not quite definite. The treatment of teacher retiring after fifteen years' service is left to the discretion of the Board.

31. *Mr. Hogben.*] If they prove their unfitness they can get the pension. You refer to subsection (2), do you not?—Yes.