

fifty babies employed, and to study their little individualities, which are much more marked at that early age than in later years.

33. I understand there are some lady teachers in receipt of very small salaries who are engaged in teaching mixed classes—boys and girls—in standard work?—Yes; that is very heavy work.

34. I was going to ask what kind of work it is. Very heavy, you say?—Very heavy.

35. There are teachers doing that at the present time?—Yes.

36. What would you say would be the effect of a continued course of that kind of work?—It is very wearing indeed. I know some of the best girls in our profession who are taking that class of work; and, of course, to bring in another little matter, a sore point with them is that the teacher on the boys' side is probably doing the same work exactly and is receiving a very much higher salary. Perhaps the girl is doing a little more than the young man, but is receiving a much lower salary. It is very heavy work, and a great strain on the nervous system.

JANE DUNLOP HOOPER examined. (No. 8.)

37. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Miss Hooper?—Headmistress in charge of infant department at the Kensington School, Dunedin.

38. You have a statement to read?—Just a short one. In the first place I should like to assure the Premier and this Committee that we of Otago appreciate their efforts to bring forward a Superannuation Bill this session. We do not agree entirely with the provisions of it, and we take leave to point out what we consider its defects, and if possible to suggest remedies. With regard to the retirement of women, the women I represent are satisfied with the provision in the Bill fixing the optional age of retirement at fifty-five, and the compulsory at sixty; but they must be satisfied that women with not less than fifteen years' service who retire medically unfit, will be entitled to an annuity calculated on the basis of a sixtieth of the average salary for each year of service. I know that the feeling amongst women in other districts is strongly in favour of fixing the optional retiring-age at fifty, and I understand that Mr. Davidson made a suggestion yesterday that women of fifty years of age, with thirty years' service, should be allowed to retire on sixtieths, that women of fifty-five might retire without any service-limit, and that women of sixty should retire. For my own part I think that is a good proposal. I am instructed also to say that we feel that in any scheme for superannuation back service should be recognised and allowed for, and that the maximum proportion of the annuity for back service be in accordance with the recommendations of the conference—namely, £72 for women.

39. *Mr. Hogben.*] That is the teachers' proposal?—Yes. That is all I have to say.

40. *Mr. J. Allen.*] You differ from some of the other women teachers with regard to the retiring-age. Can you give us any reasons from your experience with regard to women at fifty-five—their physical condition, and so on—their being unfit to go on after fifty, as a rule?

41. *The Chairman.*] You are asked for your own personal opinion?—I do not know that we have many in our district whom I could point to that are past that age. It was the opinion of the meeting, when we considered the matter, that it was wise to make the retiring-age fifty-five.

42. *Mr. J. Allen.*] What is your own opinion?—I think there might in a few cases be a necessity for women to go off at fifty, but from what I have seen in our district I think fifty-five would do.

43. What percentage do you think would come under the definition which you have mentioned—that some ought to go off at fifty? How many of the whole number?—I could not give any definite number, but I think it would be very small.

44. I suppose you are talking about Otago?—Yes.

45. Do you think climate would make any difference?—Possibly it would. I think the northern climate is more trying, perhaps.

46. You seem to have some doubts about clause 13—about retiring medically unfit?—Yes. It makes provision there for retirement on sixtieths.

*Mr. J. Allen:* I think we know the difficulty. I will not pursue the question.

47. *Mr. Major.*] In arriving at the conclusion that fifty-five would be a reasonable age at which retirement should take place, was the financial aspect of the question dealt with?—Yes, it was; and the opinion of some of the teachers at the meeting was that if they retired before that age the amount of the annuity would be very small, so they thought they would prefer to go on till they were fifty-five and have a reasonable amount.

48. It was not so much a question as to whether the vitality and staying-power of the women of Otago were better than those of the northern women?—I do not think we considered them as opposed to the northern ones at all; but it was the opinion of several at the meeting that they would be able to go on to that age, and in one case it was suggested that they might go on longer.

49. Well, then, it was not exclusively financial reasons that induced you to give the evidence that you have given to the Committee?—Not exclusively.

50. *Mr. Buddo.*] Is there any instance, among the teachers whom you know, where the teacher has been obliged to leave before reaching the age of fifty, feeling herself unfit for her duties?—I do not think I can state a case. I do not think I remember any at the present moment.

51. On the other hand, do you know of any teachers continuing in the service who are over the age of fifty?—I do not know their ages, but as far as I can judge there might be a few.

52. There are, to your own knowledge, a few over fifty that are still in the service?—Yes, that is correct.

53. While you were discussing this question did any of the older teachers express any feeling that they would, if they were sure of a reasonable amount of superannuation, like to leave the service and take advantage of the superannuation—I speak of those over, or we will say approaching, fifty—in preference to continuing at work and drawing a salary?—I think it was the other way about.