

177. You think that eightieths should be counted up to the time of the passing of this Act?—Yes; from 1877 up to the passing of this Act.

178. I understand you to say that you are prepared, on behalf of yourself and other teachers, to allow the £26,000 to be impounded for one year and to go to Capital Account?—Yes.

179. Are you prepared to allow a portion of the £26,000 to go annually to strengthen the fund?—I think so, if that was thought a more advisable course.

180. Do you know that it has been reported to us that £10,000 a year extra is needed to provide for the provisions of the Bill?—I am not aware that £10,000 would cover the whole of it.

181. That is to say, it would not cover it?—Just so.

182. Then how much of the £26,000 do you think the teachers would be willing to forego in order to make the scheme thoroughly sound?—I do not know; but I have in my possession evidence given by a man at a meeting in Canterbury, that teachers are willing to make almost any sacrifice to make the scheme sound. I cannot speak definitely on that question. I have a sum in my mind.

183. What is your opinion about it? What would you let go, of the £26,000, in order to make the scheme sound?—I would give the whole amount for one year.

184. One year will not help us a bit. It is an annual contribution that I am speaking of?—Well, I think, £5,000.

185. That would mean that the State would have to find another £5,000—another amount—to make the scheme sound?—I simply said £5,000 at the present time. I think the teachers would go even further than that.

186. They desire the fund made sound?—Do not misunderstand me. I think the precedent of other countries should be followed and that the State should subsidise the fund largely, in the interests of education.

187. *The Chairman.*] In your opinion is not a strong and, to some extent, liberal superannuation fund much more to be desired by the teachers than any great increase in salaries?—Yes, I think so; and I base my opinion on this, that it has worked out well in other countries.

188. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Would you give the whole £26,000 every year to put this scheme—if that amount would do it—on the basis of the teachers' conference recommendations?—I do not think the teachers are in a position, some of them, to do that. Their salaries at the present time, especially the lower ones, need supplementing. Personally, I would, if you asked me my personal opinion. But surely you are putting an extreme case.

189. *Mr. Buddo.*] You come from the North Canterbury district, Mr. Hughes?—Yes.

190. You know, I dare say, several teachers who have been in the service many years and have reached the age mentioned in the Bill for retirement, who would wish to retire?—Yes.

191. You believe they wish to retire?—Undoubtedly.

192. What would you consider a reasonable superannuation to be paid to those teachers that I refer to—teachers having salaries of from £300 to £400 per annum?—If they retired at once?

193. Well, you are aware that their time is up and that they would have to retire?—I can only refer you to what the conference suggested—£120; but we are prepared to reduce that.

194. The minimum set out in the Bill is £52. What would you consider a reasonable minimum in those cases?—I should think not less than £78.

195. You referred to the proposal to keep back for one year the £26,000 for additions to salaries, in order to strengthen the fund?—Yes.

196. In that case would you suggest that the teachers should, out of their present salaries, make their contributions for the first year?—Yes; that would be £26,000 plus £30,000 of contributions?

197. Yes; that is what I want to get at?—I would prefer, rather than do that, to lock up the fund for one year.

198. You would prefer to keep the benefits back for one year?—Yes. I think that £26,000 of the increase in salaries for one year might strengthen the fund materially—that is, £30,000 plus £26,000 would make £56,000, which I think would be a fair nucleus.

199. You are headmaster of a large school. What is your opinion of the proposal in the Bill with regard to the optional and compulsory retiring-ages for female teachers?—I have said that if it were possible financially I would like to see the age made fifty.

200. *The Chairman.*] That is, the optional retiring-age?—Yes. I would not like to see it made compulsory at fifty-five, for this reason; that the personal equation is so great a factor. But it would not be unreasonable to say fifty-five.

201. *Mr. Buddo.*] Am I to take it that you are in favour of the proposal in the Bill, or do you suggest taking five years off the compulsory retiring-age for female teachers?—If it is possible financially I am strongly in favour of that.

202. On what grounds are you in favour of it?—On these grounds, that women feel the strain of teaching to a greater extent than men, and I believe there is such a thing as strain that tells upon women which cannot be assessed by two doctors, and they cannot come on the fund under the "medically unfit" clause. I have known such cases, and there is not the slightest doubt that youthfulness in a profession is a desirable thing. Experience is good, too; but to my mind it is in the interests of the children of the colony that they should be influenced by young and fresh minds. Do not misunderstand me. I say that the personal equation is so strong a factor that I would not like to assess it. Mr. Gladstone was a good man at seventy.

203. Speaking generally, you would say that it would be better to reduce the compulsory retiring-age by five years?—Yes, I think so. I mean the optional retiring-age.

204. Will you state if you would reduce both the optional and the compulsory retiring-ages?—You mean fix the optional age at fifty and the compulsory age at fifty-five?

205. The compulsory at fifty?—Oh, certainly not.