

85. In respect of the widow who has received a portion of her allowance and then dies, do you mean that the balance of the contributions is to be paid, or the balance of the contributions and the £200 together?—According to the Bill, I think it is the £200 plus the contributions.

86. *The Chairman.*] Is the proposal in the Bill what you want?—No. Supposing £300 was payable to the widow, and she had received £150. I say the remaining £150 should go to her children under fourteen, if there were any. If there were no children under fourteen, that amount would simply be absorbed by the fund. Say, the widow had received a portion of her allowance, then, the remaining portion would go to the children if there were any under fourteen.

87. *Mr. Hogben.*] Including the £200?—Yes.

88. *Mr. Allen.*] Could you tell us whether it would be more favourably received by the teachers generally if we attempted to make some provision for back allowance, and reduced the age, say, with regard to women, and utilised for that purpose some of the money that is suggested for increases in salaries?—I think that members of the executive and those who have taken a prominent part in this matter could get teachers to agree to that. The main contention is for something for back service.

89. If we could do something with regard to back service, you think that generally the Bill would be acceptable?—Yes. There are some teachers who will not give it any consideration at all, and who wish to retire on the same lines as the Railway servants; but there are others who are more moderate in their views than that.

90. You do not object to the average salary being taken as the basis for the pensions?—I think it is equitable, although it tells strongly against us as compared with the Railway men. If you gave us the Railway basis, and made it eightieths instead of sixtieths, as proposed, the higher-salaried men would be better off than if the average salary were taken and the annuity based on sixtieths.

91. *Mr. Fisher.*] You would rather take the scheme as it is than have no scheme at all?—I wish that to be clearly understood. If you think among yourselves that there is no chance of giving a scheme of a rather more equitable nature, then I would say take the scheme as it is—emphatically so. I should be very sorry if anything I have said should jeopardize it. The scheme, however, unless amended, will not retire old teachers, so will partially fail in its object. But I think that we as teachers have a perfect right to criticize any scheme in which we are interested. We are not looking at the matter from a purely selfish point of view; we have the service in view as well, and if you do not do as others are doing, and give us terms that are fairly reasonable, of course you will not get good teachers.

92. It is simply an effort on your part to get the best scheme you can?—Yes, naturally, but at the same time, we think it is extremely moderate in comparison with what the Government have done for other services.

93. You think that some of the old teachers would not go on the fund under this Bill?—Certainly, they will not.

94. Would it not help the scheme financially if they did not?—It might, but it might have a bad effect upon education. It is well known that there are teachers in the service who ought to be retired, and these will simply keep on as long as they can.

95. *Mr. Major.*] The principal defect, as far as the teachers can discover, is that no provision is made for back service being allowed for?—That is so.

96. The conference was fairly unanimous on that question?—Yes, the conference agreed pretty well.

97. You heard Mr. Gill make the statement that the teachers were inclined to favour the proposal that no benefits should be derived from the fund for a period of three years; that no teachers should receive benefits for that period, in order that the fund might be strengthened?—That has not been discussed by the teachers' institutes at all. But if you can give us more liberal allowances, have back service allowances, and perhaps reduce the women's retiring age from fifty-five to fifty-two or fifty-three, I shall do my best to persuade teachers to lock up the fund for one or two years. The matter, however, has not been discussed by the teachers at all.

98. At the conference the teachers realised that the only obstacles were financial ones, I suppose?—That is so.

99. And they realised that the matter of back service was the most important factor to be dealt with?—That is so.

100. The question was, "What arrangements could be made that would be satisfactory to both the teachers and the finances of the colony"?—Yes; they compromised between the two in some way or other. There are a large number of teachers drawing fairly large salaries, and they were discontented at the £120 fixed upon. But we recognised that the finances of the colony have to be considered.

101. In tendering his evidence to the Committee Mr. Gill said he thought the minimum pension of £52 was a reasonable one. Are you of the same opinion?—Yes, as a minimum; but, unfortunately for most teachers it will be the maximum for the next twenty years.

102. Objection has been taken to the payment of a pension of a minimum of £52. A number of teachers, I understand, say that a man and his wife would be in receipt of the same amount by reason of the old-age pensions: they would get £52 a year between them?—That is so.

103. *Mr. McNab.*] The teachers realise, do they not, that the proposals contained in the Bill mean in effect a very considerable State contribution to the fund?—The Railway fund—

104. I do not want to go into the matter of the Railway fund, but to just keep to this?—There are two funds that have not been State-aided. The Railway fund seems to be working out all right, and if that does not require a contribution from the State why should ours?