

except in exceptional instances, and second assistants' salaries were considerably improved. But the gap between the first assistants and the headmasters was just as large as, if not larger than, that between the first assistant and the second, so if it were a question of removing gaps then the first assistants should not have been selected, in my opinion, as the one set of teachers to be penalised.

34. How many first assistants in the colony are receiving over £300 a year?—I should say not more than about two.

35. How many headmasters?—I should say about thirty-five, from guesswork.

36. I suppose you take an interest in the working of the Teachers' Salaries Act?—I did some time ago, but lately I was approached by the first assistants and asked to appear before you, and I have not been giving the close attention to the Education Act and the various Acts connected with it that I should have been giving. I have put in my time at this for the last two or three days and have looked at nothing else.

37. Are you aware of the amount that we increased the teachers' salaries by in the last Act we passed?—No.

38. Do you not consider that the Teachers' Superannuation Act assisted to increase your salaries?—Yes.

39. You say here in your petition that first assistants were unable to contribute towards the Superannuation Fund by reason of their salaries being too low?—I do not know personally that any of them have refused. I know that I pay towards the superannuation myself. That clause in the petition I think the first assistants in Otago have not gone into, because I know of none that have refused to pay.

40. You know of no first assistant who has refused to join the fund?—I think they are all on the fund in Dunedin.

41. Are they generally well satisfied?—No.

42. If not, why not?—Because they consider, as I said before, that with the increased cost of living, and the fact that they are now earning less than they did under the Otago Education Board, they are not so well off as they expected to be.

43. Would not the giving of an additional increase to the first assistants mean a levelling-up—an increase from the lower grades?—That would be a matter for Parliament to determine. They could, if they pleased, increase the salaries of the first assistants and of no other teachers.

44. Can you say if the second assistants are satisfied?—No, and I do not think that, as far as Otago itself is concerned, either the Board or the teaching staff generally are satisfied with the treatment of second assistants. They find that the work done by the second assistants now is considerably inferior to what was done by the second assistants under the Otago Education Board.

45. You say it is inferior: Would you elucidate that view a little more?—Yes. Four years ago I had work done by a second assistant sent up to me that was practically reliable work when it came to me. I knew where to commence, and I know what to expect in the way of knowledge and knowledge remembered. At the present time I assume when the second assistants come to me that I must be satisfied with 50 per cent. of the knowledge that I got in the past, say four years ago, when we had a teacher appointed under the Otago Education Board's *régime*; and I am not singular in that respect. Headmasters and first assistants have told me that the work done by second assistants now is considerably lower. I am speaking of Otago alone.

46. That is by reason of the class of teacher?—The salary now paid does not attract as good a class of men as it did before.

47. Do you know any second assistants who have left the service?—At the present moment I can only remember one. He left last week.

48. Do you know why?—He was attracted towards journalism. He thought he had better opportunities in that direction.

49. Are you speaking on behalf of the first assistants of the Dominion, or of the first assistants of Otago?—The first assistants of Otago.

50. What qualification do the majority of first assistants hold throughout the Dominion—B 1?—I should say that perhaps one-third hold D 1, one-third C 1, and the remainder B 1 and A.

51. The majority would be D 1?—D and C.

52. Is that not rather low for a first assistant?—No. Many of the headmasters in the Dominion are D 1. Then, you see, the older a teacher is the greater probability have you of finding that his classification is not high, but that he has maintained his position by virtue of his ability as a teacher to impart knowledge.

53. But having regard to the facilities now given for higher education and for training of teachers, do you not think that we should have a higher grade for first assistants than D 1?—Certainly you should in the time to come.

54. And with increased salaries, do you think we shall command a teacher of higher status?—I dare say you will, but possibly for some seven, eight, or nine years you may have a difficulty. At present there is a certain amount of discontent in the air, but when the young fellows come on the probability is that the present discontent will wear away, and that young men will come into the positions and qualify themselves with university degrees.

55. In what class of the profession particularly do you find there is dissatisfaction with the salary?—Speaking from the point of view of those with whom I mostly come in contact, but not speaking personally, the first assistants are the most disappointed.

56. Of course, you have said that you cannot say much as to the position of other teachers—that you really considered this matter from the standpoint of the first assistants?—Yes.

57. And you base that opinion which you expressed just now upon really a limited knowledge?—Certainly.