

177. So that would lessen to £70 the difference between the first assistant and the headmaster, and increase to £90 the distance between the first assistant and the second?—It is not so much as that.

178. Is that not so?—I do not think it is worth while to ask me to give all these figures, because I have not come prepared.

179. If the distance between them is £80 on each side?—It is not so. That is not the evidence I gave.

180. Your opinion, then, is that the increase that the first assistants ask for, which would lessen the gap between the headmaster and them, would not in any way be unfair to the second assistants?—I do not see how it could be. If there were any unfairness in the position, the first assistants would not be responsible for that unfairness, no matter what increase they got.

181. I mean to say, it would not make the disproportion to the disadvantage of the assistants below the first?—I do not think the second assistants would be prepared to make any complaint, and I do not think they would be justified in feeling that they had any grievance on that account.

182. *Mr. Baume.* Something has been said about hearsay evidence: I take it that you are appearing for the whole body of these first assistants?—Well, I cannot say so; but the fact of there being a colonial petition in connection with the matter may be taken as evidence in that direction.

183. And what you tell us cannot necessarily be based altogether upon personal knowledge on your part?—Certainly not. I read that tea comes from China. I have never been there, but I assume that it is correct.

184. When you speak about cases of injustice, if they have not happened to yourself, then you cannot speak from personal knowledge?—No.

185. Have you any reason to doubt the statements that have been made to you by teachers complaining of injustice and unfair treatment?—No. I am inclined to accept them as being in most cases correct. There may be supposed cases of injustice which, on investigation, may turn out to be without foundation, but I do think that some of these complaints are well based.

186. I take it that with regard to some of the cases, at any rate, you are acquainted with the circumstances?—Yes. There is a certain amount of detail that gives an air of verisimilitude to the statement made to me.

187. And you believe that in certain cases, at any rate, injustice has been done?—Yes.

188. Does that lead you to the belief that the present system should be exchanged for a system of scientific and regular promotion of teachers?—That is too difficult a question for me to go into just now. I have seen the scientific method of dealing with teachers tried in Victoria, and I consider that it was a comparative failure. I am a great believer in local control myself, more particularly if there is any chance of securing an approximation to honesty, and I could not say offhand which is the better method. With all its drawbacks, I prefer the local system to the Victorian one.

189. Do you think that you are voicing the opinions of the first assistants generally when you say you would not prefer to see instituted a comprehensive scheme of promotion?—No; I think that most assistants and most headmasters—in fact, all classes—would like to see a comprehensive scheme of promotion introduced, based upon experience and ability to teach.

190. In which the personal judgment of the School Boards and School Committees should have very little weight?—Considerably less weight than they have at present.

191. You said something about local influence being brought to bear upon Committees: I think your remarks apply more to School Committees than to Boards of Education, do they not?—Yes.

192. And that selection by the Board would be more satisfactory to the general body of teachers than dependence upon the local Committees?—Yes, I think that is so.

193. Coming back to the question of the first assistants, do I understand that the first assistants make no comparison between their salaries and those of the headmasters on the one hand and of the second assistants on the other?—They make no comparison at all. They simply ask as a matter of absolute justice.

194. It is a question of absolute rise, not relative rise?—That is so.

195. The question of adaptation of the scale afterwards you express no opinion about?—No.

196. May I take it that you do not care to express an opinion?—I should not mind giving one if I had formed one.

197. Have you formed one?—Yes, based on the experience of the past. If it were considered necessary to lessen a gap, then the question of the gap between the first assistants and the headmasters should have been considered, because I consider the headmasters are relatively well treated, compared with first assistants.

198. Do you not think that the gap between the first assistant and the headmaster should be, at any rate, equal to the gap between the first assistant and the second?—Yes, I think it should, because I consider that even where the highest salaries are paid to the headmasters, those cannot be looked upon as very great prizes in the profession.

199. With reference to the deterioration of the second assistants, do you attribute that to a general deterioration in teaching-power amongst the junior assistants of the Dominion?—No. I think that, if anything, the effect of the introduction of the new syllabus and the introduction of the Act for staffing and salaries has been to bring about a considerable improvement.

200. How do you account, then, for the specific deterioration of the second assistants?—I do not say that the second assistants throughout New Zealand have deteriorated at all. I merely meant that that was the position as it affected Otago.

201. Is that a question of bad selection, then?—No.