

202. Will you give us your reason for stating that the second assistants in Otago are specially weak?—I have already given that. Under the Otago Education Board, before the new Act came in, salaries were paid to second assistants amounting in many cases to as much as £200. If you expect to get the same quality of work done by a man who is in receipt of only £130 or £140 you must look for disappointment.

203. Then, what becomes of the man who would previously have applied for the second-assistantship, if he does not become a second assistant?—Practically he is a second assistant and he has to stagnate.

204. You do not answer my question. You say that the second assistant has deteriorated, and he has deteriorated for a reason?—I did not say that. What I meant to say was that the class of men promoted to the position now is not so good as it was before.

205. Then, what becomes of the man who would have been promoted previously?—I suppose he has gone to the country or into other walks of life. I have not made a complete study of the animal. I do not know where he has gone to.

206. But, then, where are you going to get your first assistants from? Are they going to be worse too?—They would be recruited from the country. They may not be recruited from the second assistants. I am speaking of Otago, of course.

207. But are they going to be worse too?—There is no possible chance of that happening.

208. You spoke about the disinclination on the part of the first assistants to go to the country: Does that disinclination exist solely and simply because there are very few desirable positions in the country?—It is partly that, but I may tell you this: that in the last two or three years some first assistants who a little while ago would not have gone to the country are now willing to go, simply because as they are growing older they would like to feel that they occupy a more independent position than they would while in the position of assistant. Supposing a man is fifty, and will be marking time from fifty to sixty, it does not suit him to be acting as an assistant.

209. You have already told us that occasionally headmasters of country schools are preferred to first assistants?—Yes.

210. Do you not think that that fact ought to induce first assistants who are desirous of promotion in their profession to apply for a country position, in order to qualify themselves for the best positions going?—That will be the ultimate effect, and it will be a very good effect; but, at present, the unfortunate position existing in several of the big centres in New Zealand is that the first assistants have had years and years of experience in their present situation, and there is very little to offer these men now. There is no favourable outlook for them at all; and unless something is done in the way of supplying them with a financial reward instead of the ordinary avenue of promotion, then these men will be a disappointed class.

211. But will they not be disappointed simply because they have made up their minds to remain first assistants? Do you not admit that it would be a very bad state of things which enabled a man to look forward to a position as first assistant as being the sum and summit of his work in the Department of Education?—I think it would be a bad thing in the interests of education that he should do so.

212. That being the case, is it not advisable that promotion to the positions of headmaster in city schools should be given to those first assistants who have qualified *via* the headmastership of country schools?—Yes; that is advisable.

213. Then the extra salary that you are asking for now is for what purpose?—To help men who have been used to a higher salary in the past, and who are now receiving a lower salary.

214. That is the whole thing?—Yes. On this point I am referring to Otago teachers.

215. *The Chairman.* Are you aware that the first assistants in Auckland have sent some petitions to this House, and the only request that they make is for house allowance?—Well, I do not know whether that is the only request they made, but I know that that was embodied in their petition.

216. They "humbly pray that a house allowance be made to all first assistants of Grade 12 or higher, such allowance to equal half of that granted to the headmasters of the same schools." That is the only request they make?—I am not in sympathy with it, for the reason that if once you start giving house allowance you must give it to all classes.

217. What yearly increments do you suggest should be given first assistants?—Ten pounds as a minimum.

218. *Mr. T. Mackenzie.* In connection with the appointment of teachers and the selection of candidates by the Board, are you really aware of the process that obtains with the Otago Education Board in connection with sending the names on to Committees?—For appointments?

219. Yes, in the country districts or anywhere?—Yes. Well, I have been told by a member of the Board and by an Inspector.

220. At any rate, speaking for the time I have been Chairman of the Board, I can say that the whole Board—or, let me put it as a question. Are you aware that the whole Board is a Selection Committee?—Yes.

221. Are you also aware that when the Selection Committee meets the Inspectors are there—if not all, at any rate two or three are. The list of applicants is sent to them, and they are asked for their recommendations, and before a single word of discussion takes place the list is given and the opinion of the Inspector on that list is obtained?—Yes.

222. The next process is that almost invariably after a little discussion the whole list goes out as submitted by the Inspectors. If that is not the case the members revise with the aid of the Inspectors. Perhaps an applicant may have been for a very long time in a remote place, and that person may, because of special service, receive preference over a teacher who may have slightly higher qualifications but who has not given the service in the back-country districts. Are you aware of that?—I am aware that that is the position taken up by the Board.