

the cost of education in some small measure. If the best schools were given, say, two years freedom from inspection, and then the Inspector came along to adjudicate upon their work, there would be a considerable gain in the fact that the Inspectors could employ their time in the schools that had more need of their assistance. I think the question of the comforts and conveniences in country teachers' houses will be held to have a bearing upon the question of efficiency. Our association felt so keenly on this matter that two years ago they petitioned Parliament, and the teachers of other education districts followed suit. I believe that it was as a sequel to those petitions that a grant was made for the improvement of the teachers' surroundings, but this grant has proved inadequate. In this connection I should like to submit to the Commission this return which has been prepared in the Education Board's Office.

*Auckland Education Board.—Conveniences to Teachers' Dwellings.—List of Improvements submitted to Department.*

	Wash-house and Bathroom.	Bathroom.	Wash-house.	Fittings to Wash-house.
Recommended to be carried out at once .. ..	19	18	4	42
Recommended to be carried out when funds available	10	8	6	14
Recommended to be deferred .. ..	30	10	..	12
Not recommended at present .. ..	12	6	..	4
Total needed .. ..	71	42	10	72
Authorized .. ..	13	17	1	6
Still needed .. ..	58	25	9	66

I should like the Commission to picture to themselves the schoolmaster's wife on washing-day, doing the family washing out of doors. Then remember that we are expected to teach the principles of hygiene, and the only example we can set to the children in our own persons is to seek the nearest creek for our ablutions. This matter has come up year after year at the Council of the New Zealand Educational Institute; resolutions bearing upon it have been carried unanimously, and sent to the Department, but the fact that it still has to come up annually is evidence of how inadequately it has been dealt with. Coming to the question of consolidating rural schools, I am entirely in sympathy with my association that it is desirable that there should be one central school with two or three teachers, instead of a number of small schools. It is true that in the Auckland District, where the roads are not perfect, that can only be done in certain parts of the province. The gain in economy must be obvious, and we would get a better class of teachers, for there would be more well-paid positions. Our Chief Inspector lately said that there were only sixty schools in the district with average attendances over 160. In the whole Dominion there are 196 with more than 160 scholars, and these are the prizes of the profession. The number of small schools up to and including thirty is 1,280 for the Dominion, and in our province there are 363 small schools. The great problem in any promotion scheme must be that there are not enough well-paid positions to go round. I think the children might be gathered for distances of ten miles if there were motor traction and good roads. This has been tried with success in countries like Victoria, Canada, and the United States. Another point is that I think teaching service ought to be counted beyond twenty years. The Auckland Board do not allow for service beyond twenty years. The ripe experience of the man who has been teaching beyond that period must be of value to the State, and some numerical value ought to be attached to it—say, half a mark per annum, or something of that kind. Recurring to the question of secondary education, I see no reason why a country child should necessarily have a classical education. I think a rural course might very well take the place of the ordinary secondary-school course, thus bringing the child into touch with his environment, and giving him a bias towards the land. The attention of the Commission has been called to certain anomalies in the staffing. I think there should be a subgrade between 36 and 80. I know of teachers who find their work very heavy indeed when their roll-number is in the eighties. It must be remembered that in that case the assistant would have something like fifty pupils, and perhaps more, in the three groups of primers, and Standards I and II: and the headmaster might have fifty pupils. There might be a very great difference between the average attendance and the roll-number. There is need for more elasticity in regard to the change of staffing from Grade 3 to Grade 4. Sometimes a school drops back to Grade 3, and yet may go back again to Grade 4 after having lost the assistant. The teacher would then be doing sole-charge work with a very heavy roll-number. I think there should be a change in the regulations whereby the change could be made more rapidly from 3 to 4—whereby such a school as I have mentioned could get an assistant again. Again referring to service in remote districts, I would like to state what is the practice in certain States. In South Australia there is an unwritten law by which service in the country is demanded of the men who are seeking promotion; in New South Wales from two to five years are asked of service in the country; in Queensland four years from male and two years from female teachers. The teacher who goes away from town and its advantages deserves especial recognition. Where the work of such a teacher commends itself to the Inspector it should be taken into account that he is doing it under grave disabilities, and special value should be attached to it. It is somewhat of a grievance with country teachers