

duller pupils, the greater portion of the class, to the assistant teacher. I do not think that is fair to the pupils, and so we want a more liberal staffing in our schools. I know there is a great deal of difficulty in this matter. A great difficulty arises from the supply of teachers with which we have to be satisfied. I think I am right in saying that all districts are experiencing a considerable amount of difficulty in filling up positions in their schools—positions in sole charge of schools and positions of assistants in schools where there is a staff. I cannot help feeling that the cause of this short supply of teachers is partly the length of service involved in the preparation for the work of teaching. A boy passes the Sixth Standard at the age of fourteen. He goes to the secondary school, and is there four years before he matriculates, leaving at eighteen years. He then spends two years in a primary school as a probationer, which brings him to the age of twenty. He has then two more years in a training college. That is to say, he is unable to earn more than a bare living before he reaches the age of twenty-two years. I think that is one reason. Then, I think another reason is that we do not pay enough; our salaries are not sufficiently high. You remember quite well that some years ago a Commission sat to inquire into the salaries paid to teachers in New Zealand, and compare them with the salaries elsewhere. As a result of that Commission the salaries paid to our teachers were considerably increased, and we were all very glad that it was so. But, after all, whether the Commission had sat or not, the salaries of teachers would have had to be increased. I do not think we could have obtained a sufficient supply of teachers to man our schools had we gone on paying our teachers what we did before. I think that is one of the things that simply would have been forced upon us whether we wished it or not, partly owing to the increased cost of living and partly owing to the reduced purchasing-power of money. The cost of living has been increasing since then, and wages have been going up in all employments, and so I feel we are not paying our teachers and assistants enough. And the third reason is that I do not think we have in our service a sufficient number of prizes. Indeed, I would go further and say I do not think we have any prizes at all in our service. I do not wish to introduce personal matters in speaking here, but I consider that the head of the whole service in New Zealand—the Inspector-General of Schools—is grossly underpaid, and that our head teachers are underpaid. A head teacher, if he be successful and able to get into one of the larger schools, gets £400 a year, plus a house allowance of £50, but he has to be six years in the highest grade before he can get that. That means to say that he cannot possibly look forward under any circumstances to getting more money than £450 a year, and there are, comparatively speaking, only a few such positions in New Zealand. You know what an incentive it is to work if people think they have a chance of doing well in the future. You may say there are a great many people in other kinds of work who are not earning anything like that. That is quite true, but they have always a chance of earning more. A doctor or a lawyer or a member of any of the other professions may not earn as much as that, I know, but each has always a chance of earning a great deal more, and it is just that chance that induces a large number of people to take up work of the kind. These are the reasons, I think, why our supply of teachers has become so short. That leads me to another matter, and it is this: Certain pupil-teachers have been withdrawn or will be withdrawn from certain grades of schools. All pupil-teachers from schools of Grades 5 and 6A will have to be withdrawn by the beginning of next year. Now, the training college receives its supply of students partly from pupil-teachers and partly from probationers who are employed, and partly from those who have had no previous experience as teachers, and are known as B students. There are other students who find their way into the training college, but these are the main sources of supply. Now, doing away with the pupil-teachers in schools of Grades 5 and 6A will mean that, so far as this district is concerned, and I have no doubt so far as other districts are concerned, there will be considerably fewer pupil-teachers available for studentships in the training colleges. The Department has given us no indication of what it means to do to make good that deficiency—that is to say, it has not told us whether it means to increase the supply of probationers—and some of us are beginning to think—perhaps we may not be correct in our surmises—that the Department is looking to the B students as the individuals who will fill the training colleges. Now, a B student is a student who passes the matriculation or higher examination, and obtains admission into a training college, but he has had no previous experience of teaching. If I may be allowed to express my own opinion in this matter, I do hope that the Department is not thinking of reducing the number of probationers. I think all people in this part of the world who think seriously about these matters are of opinion that it is a good thing that the pupil-teacher should gradually disappear from our public schools. Whether the time has arrived, however, for doing away with our pupil-teachers or not I am hardly prepared to say. In Auckland we have a great deal of difficulty in obtaining suitable people to man our sole-charge schools and smaller schools, and, indeed, to act as assistants in country schools. Now, we are asked to find for schools of Grades 5 and 6A a number of assistants by the beginning of next year. We certainly shall be able to find these assistants, but it means we shall have to withdraw from our supply of teachers a number of those who otherwise would have been sent into the country, and for that reason I do not know whether it would not have been wise, so far as Auckland is concerned, to continue these pupil-teachers in schools of Grades 5 and 6A for a year or two longer. The training colleges have to be filled, because we are all crying out for teachers throughout New Zealand, and it is to be hoped that the supply of teachers will come from the increased supply of probationers. There will be no doubt, I think, in the mind of anybody that a training-college student should have some knowledge of teaching, of the practical work of teaching, before he enters the training college. I think all people are agreed about that. He profits far more by the instruction he receives if he is able to consider it in connection with the practical work he himself has been called upon to do or to witness. Now, I may be told that he gets that practical work in the training college, and is asked to do it there, but I cannot help feeling that the conditions are not the same in a