

the school is placed, the increase to or withdrawal from the staff should at once be made. As has been pointed out, this is a matter which specially concerns this district, where there are so many growing schools. (2.) Substitution of Assistants for Pupil-teachers—The substitution of assistants for pupil-teachers in schools above Grade 6A is most desirable, implying, as it does, the abolition of all pupil-teachers. But it must be remembered that in this district, owing to phenomenal expansion, the difficulty of obtaining suitable assistants is becoming greater each year; so that it is questionable whether it would be in the interests of the service to advocate any further reduction of pupil-teachers just at present. To strengthen the staffs of the higher-grade schools by the withdrawal of pupil-teachers and the appointment of assistants would certainly tend to accentuate the difficulty of obtaining suitable applicants for our sole-charge schools, and would probably result in the appointment to low-grade schools (and these are in the majority in this district) of relatively inferior teachers. (3.) Anomalies in Staffing—The anomalies to which attention is drawn in the staffing in Grades 9A and 9B, as also in Grades 9C and 10A, seem to call for some amendment. (4.) The Effect of Epidemics on Staffing—The suggestions made under this head to meet the case of the growing school appear to have much to recommend them. I would recommend that copies of the memorandum from the Headmasters' Association, and of this report, be forwarded to the Education Department, Wellington, where it is to be hoped that steps may be taken to bring about such modification of regulation as will lead to improved staffing conditions.—E. K. MULGAN, Chief Inspector." I desire now to make some observations under clause 11, as to examinations. I would point out that some pupils in Standard VI are obliged to have three examinations one after the other at the end of the year—the periodical examination at the end of the year, the proficiency examination by the Inspector, and frequently the Free Place and Scholarship Examination by the Department. We consider that one of the examinations should be sufficient. I do not suggest which one, but that one examination would be ample for all requirements. With regard to the periodical examinations, we suggest that there should be two a year instead of three. We also suggest that it is quite unnecessary and undesirable, and a waste of time, to assign numerical marks to the work of every child in every subject. The Inspector's visit with notice is also open to objection. I think it should be abolished, because it leads to cramming, as under the old standard examination. What we ask for is less examination and more inspection. In this connection the question of records and returns is of great importance. The headmaster of a large school has an unduly great proportion of his time taken up in keeping records and holding examinations, and seeing that returns are made—time which would be far better spent in supervising the educational work of the school. There is a feeling that the time has arrived when kindergartens might very well be started in the more crowded centres, and that provision for the education of abnormal children—whether mentally or physically abnormal—should be made in the larger centres. With regard to superannuation, I would ask the Commissioners to regard particularly its bearing on inducing an old and infirm teacher, a man past his prime, to accept a position or to leave the service. When the Act came into operation many teachers did not come under its provisions. The result is that there is a temptation for those teachers to continue at work when they are really unfit for duty. I would suggest an amendment of the Act to allow them to come in. Another point is that we should like the superannuation to be calculated on the three years in which the man has received the highest salary rather than his last three years in the service. The reason is this: A person may have charge of a Grade 10 school, and may, by reason of infirmity, be unable to carry on his duties as he should. He would not care to give up that position because of the financial loss in the matter of superannuation. Not only that, but the Board would have some compassion upon him, and would probably not remove him. So that the service would benefit by inducing him to take some lighter employment in his later years without reducing his superannuation accordingly.

11. *Mr. Davidson.*] What is the average attendance at your school?—The average for last quarter was 926.

12. What, in your opinion, is the most desirable size of school?—My personal opinion is that a school of that size is the most easily conducted under the present scale of staffing. You can group your scholars within the standard. For instance, my Standard I is a class of 150 or 160, and Standard II numbers between 130 and 140. In each of those classes I have three separate groups, and there are three teachers—two assistants and a junior—attached to each class. In my opinion, those two are the most satisfactory classes I have had to do with in my whole experience. At the same time, I must admit that the bulk of the teachers favour a smaller school, and then there would be more headmasterships available.

13. Does not the time that must be taken up by the headmaster of such a school in examining the children and tabulating the numerical marks encroach very considerably upon the time he, as headmaster, could give to the supervision and instruction of the weaker teachers?—It does. I get over it by delegating the clerical work to assistants.

14. If your school were reduced in average attendance, would your salary be affected?—Not in the least.

15. What, then, do you think was the object of the Department in limiting the salary, or providing the maximum salary for a school of 600?—I presume it thinks a school of 600 is large enough for any one to manage. I may say that for the month of February our average attendance was 942.

16. Do you think it would be an advantage to teachers, particularly to inexperienced teachers, if the Department in New Zealand were to issue something on the lines of the "Aids to the Course of Study," issued monthly in Victoria? Those aids are compiled by a committee of experienced and successful teachers?—I think that would be a great help to inexperienced teachers, but it would be very undesirable to have such a scheme made compulsory. An experienced teacher will work much better under his own scheme than under any scheme prepared by any one else. I get the "Aids" every month, and they are very helpful to an inexperienced teacher.