

fering with his own work. When you come to the difference of cost—I have not worked it out exactly—the cost of giving assistants, instead of pupil-teachers, in schools of 36 and upwards may amount to as much as £15,000 for the colony.

7. *Mr. Weston.*] £15,000?—Yes. However, by doing that you are benefiting substantially one-fourth of the schools of the colony. The proposed scale gives an assistant teacher when the average attendance at a school is 36. The next thing is the proportion of pupil-teachers to adult teachers. The proportion of pupil-teachers to adult teachers, taking the whole colony, is, in my opinion, too large for real efficiency. In considering the proportion there are three things to be considered—the cheapness, the efficiency, and the supply of teachers. The proportion, roughly speaking, is about two and a half adults to one pupil-teacher. The proposed scale gives 3·85—not quite four—adults to one pupil-teacher. It has been suggested by the Educational Institute, in a resolution forwarded to the Minister, that there should be five to one. In the London schools the number is about 4·6 to one, the tendency being to reduce the number of pupil-teachers. The proportion in Birmingham is four to one. The proposals would give in the schools of 20 and upwards one pupil-teacher for every three and one-third adults. At present in such schools we find one pupil-teacher for every 2·12 adult teachers. The different districts vary. The supply of pupil-teachers at present being trained in the colony, if they all continue—at all events, for a reasonable time, in the course of their profession, would give too many teachers, even making allowance for the female pupil-teachers who fall out in the natural process by getting married, and so on. The proposed staff of pupil-teachers, numbering 778, is about the number that is required to keep up the supply after you add to it the number of teachers who would come into the profession without being pupil-teachers. The number of pupils intrusted to each teacher is too large for much individual attention. I hope, Mr. Chairman, as I refer to individual districts in New Zealand, I shall not be thought to be making an invidious comparison. It has been said—I do not express any opinion upon it—that in Otago the salaries of the teachers of small schools have been higher than in other districts; thereby you increase the efficiency of the teachers you attract; that is the natural consequence. It has been further said that such teachers can deal with a larger number of children than the teachers who are less salaried, and who are presumably a little less skilled. This statement is sometimes quoted as if there was no limit to it. The pace of the class depends not only on the skill of the teacher, but depends also on the receptive power of the child. It does not matter how you teach, or with what amount of skill you exhibit a fact or process, or how you analyse the method of teaching, inevitably there is a limit to the number of children of average capacity that a teacher can teach with efficiency, though it is very difficult to define the limit. The whole direction of modern education is that you must give fewer pupils per teacher if you are going to carry out an efficient scale of staff—it necessarily means that. Taking all schools in New Zealand, the average number per teacher is 30½, and in schools of 20 and upwards 32, or, I should say, nearly 33. The proposed scale gives 29·2 per teacher, and in schools of 20 and upwards 31·1. Taking London, Birmingham, and Glasgow, all of which are moved by the most forward ideas—and I might include Manchester—we find a more liberal staffing; the number in London per teacher is 34. If you take the schools in New Zealand that correspond to the schools taken for the figure 34—that is, schools above 250—the proposed scale, which is a little more liberal than our existing scales of staffing, gives 38 pupils per teacher. This is as far as the finances will allow us to go. In Birmingham the number is 34. Taken all round, and considering what they are doing in schools of the same kind in England and Scotland, I think we are not going too far in proposing to make the staff more liberal than it is at present. The next point is that the proportion of pupil-teachers in large schools in some districts is too high. Attention is called to that in the last report of the Minister of Education. The most striking instances are in infant-schools. I think they should be staffed more strongly: my opinion is very pronounced about that. A case in point is that of an infant-school which has two adults and eleven pupil-teachers. Under the proposed scale the number of adult teachers is always in excess of the number of pupil-teachers. In large schools, where the schools are large enough to be in a sense double, and the classes are in two divisions, the harder division to teach—containing the pupils of lower attainments—is given to the teacher, and the smaller and more advanced portion of the class is given to the pupil-teacher. That kind of arrangement is also carried out in schools where two standards can be grouped together, and the adult and pupil teacher can change about from time to time. This can be done if you do not make the number of pupil-teachers exceed the number of adult teachers. For the December quarter, 1899, head-teachers numbered 1,645; assistants, 896: the total adult teachers, exclusive of sewing-mistresses, 2,541; pupil-teachers, 1,022. That was the actual staff. The proposed scale of staff would give—Head-teachers, 1,645; assistants, 1,354 (or adult teachers, exclusive of sewing-mistresses, 2,999); and pupil-teachers, 778. I presume that a scheme like this would take four years to work out fully—that is, until the present pupil-teachers' courses run out. For the fourth year the full supply of certificated teachers would be available. I have here a table showing the staffing of schools in the various districts, and in certain Australian Colonies, which I will place at the Commission's disposal [Exhibit 6]. Coming to salaries, I do not think I need really go in detail into the matter of the comparison of salaries, for it will come out in evidence given in the several districts. I have here a table of the maximum salaries payable to headmasters [Exhibit 7]. The lowest salary, according to the scales prevailing in New Zealand, is £70. I am leaving out schools under 20. In aided schools salaries a little lower than that are actually paid. The highest salary shown for a school of 20 in any district in New Zealand is £115. I would suggest that for a male teacher the salary should be £120, and for a female teacher £104. For schools of 100 there is a wide range; the salaries differ from £160 to £225. The proposed scale for New Zealand is £189; there are very few near the £225, and £189 seems almost as far as the money will allow us to go. In schools of 250 salaries of head-teachers range from £203 to £275. I propose to make it £254.