

their powers of spending their money, for they cannot spend out of the vote for maintenance, or rebuilding, or rebuilding of teachers' residences any money for small alterations. They have, under the Committee's report, to make application to the Government for moneys out of a special vote for building new schools and for making additions and alterations?—That is, for extensions.

25. Extensions or alterations—altering a class-room, for instance. The Board's have to make application to the Government for that, and they object to it: We want to know what your experience is with respect to that matter, and whether you have any suggestion to make to improve this condition of affairs. You understand the position?—I fancy I do; but it only shows that there must be some misapprehension in this way. For upkeep in the direction you have stated the Education Boards of the colony spent only £27,324, while the suggestions of the Committee in their report—on page 3—go to show that £38,621 would be required. In other words, the Boards spent 4s. 10d. a head, and the report suggests 6s. 9½d. a head as necessary.

26. The report does not deal with the matter from the point of view of so-much per head: it is so-much per cent. upon the cost of the buildings at the time we made the report?—I have worked out the rate at per head myself.

27. What we want to get at is, have you any comment to make upon the Committee's report of last year as to the maintenance vote, in reference to the alterations, small alterations, and so on, with regard to application having to be made to the Government for money to make alterations and build new schools? Do you object to this method of dealing with maintenance?—Yes; I think that is a wrong method. May I merely state these things as a summary of that report? The Committee suggested that the upkeep required would be £38,621.

28. What do you mean by "upkeep"? That is, maintenance.

29. Where do you get that from?—I get it by adding together the items for maintenance—school buildings and residences—in paragraph 7 of the Committee's report.

30. *Mr. Foulds.*] You leave out the rebuilding?—I have classified the items—(a) into maintenance, and (b) rebuilding school buildings. New buildings I have separated from maintenance, or upkeep. The Committee suggest a certain amount of money—£38,621—should be provided for upkeep, and £19,038 for new buildings in consequence of rebuilding. That is what the Committee propose.

31. *Mr. J. Allen.*] What comment have you to make upon that?—According to these tabulations, in preparing which I summarised, worked out, and classified the expenditure on maintenance and buildings according to the annual reports of the various Education Boards, I find that the various Education Boards actually spent on upkeep £27,324, or only 4s. 10d. per head, while on new buildings they actually spent £45,935, or 8s. 1½d. a head.

32. What do you mean by "new buildings"? Does that not mean new buildings in place of old ones, as well as the creation of new buildings altogether?—I assume they are new buildings. I suppose they are in new districts, or extension in present ones. I am taking such facts as I have from your report.

33. Have you distinctly kept the replacing of old buildings apart from new buildings in new districts?—If the Committee will be good enough to look at any one of the balance-sheets they will see that the same statement occurs in each of them—"maintenance of school buildings," "new schools," "additions," "sites." Those are the terms, and I worked out the figures under those headings.

*Sir Edward Gibbes:* That all relates to a period prior to the Committee's recommendation.

34. *Mr. J. Allen.*] What Mr. Hill is quoting from does not deal with the Committee's report at all. We had better get Mr. Hill back to the actual question that we want to get at. The Committee's report of last year recommended that a percentage upon the cost of construction should be set aside for the maintenance of school buildings and teachers' residences, and should be used only for maintenance—for upkeep. You object to that, you say. Upon what ground?—I say that as far as my experience goes—

35. First of all, do you object to the principle?—I say the principle is a wrong one.

36. Why?—For this reason: The timbers used in the erection of schools have not the same life in the various districts. You cannot form a basis of calculation as to how long a school will last if you take one in Auckland and another down in Otago. It is impossible in that way to form an estimate as to how long a school will last. The timber is not the same. Then, there are varieties of timber and physical conditions. In fact, to my mind, those two points are fatal to taking that as a basis. I say the true basis is this: You have had an experience of twenty-five years; you know exactly according to your own return here that the buildings are worth £933,705. You say that if you take a common estimate—I do not say that it is a correct one, but for ordinary working purposes it will do—you can take the life of a school as being thirty years. During the first six years, after the school has been painted and put into proper working-order, there is no expenditure required; so that the school really, in the matter of maintenance—that is, in its upkeep—has to be considered as lasting twenty-four years before it will require renewing, and until it requires renewing it will amount to a definite sum per head to maintain for upkeep year by year estimated on the cost of construction per head for the colony.

37. I do not want to talk of renewal just now: I am talking of maintenance, pure and simple—painting and repairs, and so on?—I am working up to that point. I say that you have this question of renewal, and we will say it costs £8 5s. a head on the basis of twenty-four years. That is the expenditure according to your return, because £8 5s. a head represents the money that has been spent in your district. If you take that as the basis and divide your £8 5s. for the colony by twenty-four, that will give you your actual wear-and-tear on the building, and that is the amount of capitation that, in my judgment, the Committee should grant to the various Education Boards in the colony, and not say to one district, "Your buildings are a little bit older than those of another district, and we will give you a little more than it." I say that is not business. I say, deal with them on the amount that it will take to renew.