

as to the needs of a school in the district, or as to whether it would be better for that district to be served by a school near at hand. If the facts so presented warranted the erection of a school, then that school should be of a type, either grade 1, 2, or 3, according to the various needs of the district, and whether it was a district that was not likely to increase, or whether it was a district that would increase slowly—and we have all this information at hand in the various Education Offices—or whether it was a district that would be likely to necessitate an early extension of the school building. In these places I would build schools to accommodate, say, thirty pupils, fifty pupils, and not more than sixty. I would never put up a room to accommodate more than sixty.

58. Who should do it, the Board or the central Government?—The Board should do it. Having received the report from the Inspector, it should make its recommendation and submit its plans to the Department, stating whether it would have a grade-1 building or a grade-2, or a grade-3. The matter should be considered on the facts presented by a departmental authority.

59. How would you avoid the position that the Hawke's Bay Board are in now, the Board recommending an addition to a school and the Department refusing it?—They ought not to refuse it; they are not carrying out their duties.

60. Never mind whether they are doing their duties. We want to avoid these difficulties?—I do not think that if there were a Council, and the facts of this case, as I happen to know them, were presented, they would ever refuse it. The fact of the refusal shows there is something wrong.

61. Is there any automatic principle by which these things could be self-adjusting in the hands of the Board?—You cannot demand money from the Department. If they say they will not give you the money there is an end to the matter. They tie your hands.

62. Can you not suggest any scheme by which there would be an automatic payment in proportion to the average attendance?—That is what I am suggesting; but the application must go to the Department first, and if it is shown there by the facts so presented that accommodation is needed, then that accommodation should be granted. That should be a part of the law. It should not depend on the whim of a Department, but it should be laid down that the Board is entitled on the average attendance to further accommodation. It should be an ordinary demand.

63. Let us suppose that the average attendance in a district was, say, 100 last year, and that when the returns come to be made up this year the average has increased by, say, fifty. Could there not be an automatic principle by which payment could be made for the increase?—No, and it would not be a just principle if you tried it. We will take a concrete illustration. Napier School formerly had to provide accommodation for, we will say, 800 children. Owing to conditions over which the Board certainly has had no control, the school has gone down 100; but the attendance has increased elsewhere. It would not follow that an increase in attendance warrants an increase in accommodation, as the increase may be in Napier where there may be plenty of accommodation.

64. There would be plenty of accommodation in the education district, though not at the school?—Possibly. It is possible for there to be ample accommodation notwithstanding this increase.

65. Is a diminution in any school district not abnormal? You spoke of a decrease in one particular school: is that abnormal?—Yes.

66. Would the chance diminution in one particular school affect the principle?—No, but it is the putting of a case such as you presented. Because a district increases, say, 500 in attendance, it does not necessarily follow that that district requires more accommodation.

67. It may not that year; but as to the question of almsgiving by the Government, can you not suggest some scheme which would make a Board's finance independent of annual begging from the Government?—It would work as a scale, just the same as the ordinary scale works. Taking the cost of all the buildings there is a certain amount—the average cost over a long period of time. You discover the average cost of providing accommodation. If the Government or the Department took that as the basis of allotment in the erection of new buildings and extensions to existing ones the moment the attendance warranted further accommodation, the application should be sent to the Department, the Minister should approve of the type of building, and the money should be granted. If it is to cost £250 the Board should not spend £350.

68. Do you know any of the facts in connection with the want of space at Mahora?—The school should be enlarged. The average attendance warrants that.

69. If any grant depends upon the whim of the Government, how would you propose to obviate an Education Board being placed in the same position as the Hawke's Bay Education Board is in now?—But all grants depend upon the whim of Government.

70. Can you devise no means by which we can get away from that?—No, because the whim of Government is a varying quantity.

71. Then, you think there could be no automatic principle?—The automatic principle, as I have already stated, is possible by taking your basis of so-much capitation——

82. So-much capitation on what?—You know what a building has cost during a series of years.

73. I am speaking of new buildings?—In making school provision you know what it costs per head. The Education Board spends so-much in making school provision. I have an example here: "1880, Napier School, fence and walls, 500 accommodation, £3,425 12s. 9d." Everything was expended in the matter of furniture, and so on, to make that school ready for work. That came to £6 17s. 5d. per head. You could not do it for that now.

74. Take the cost at £7 per head?—Taking all the school buildings in New Zealand, according to the Committee's return it would be £8 5s.

75. We will say £8 on an average. Then, if there is an increase of fifty children in the Hawke's Bay District, I want to know whether there ought not to be £400 available the next year?—Not necessarily. The district may not be entitled to a penny, or it may be entitled to the maximum of £400.