

76. I am supposing that there is an increase of fifty, and that it costs £8 to house a child. The Education Board will, according to my lights, sooner or later have to house those children. I want them to ascertain whether there is not some automatic principle by which the Board shall be rendered independent of going to the Government for that money?—You mean to say that the Board should be credited with a capital amount of £400 in anticipation of a possible increase in the district.

77. But I have shown that there is the increase?—I want to point out that that increase may not require accommodation.

78. But I say it does exist?—Take Napier. If the attendance increased by 100 there, we should not want any increased accommodation.

79. But you would want a fund?—You must wait until you do want it.

80. Then, you must go and beg?—There is no begging if the regulation provides that you shall make your application as soon as the demand has arisen.

81. Do you think a Board ought to be considered the proper authority to judge when an addition is necessary?—Most certainly.

82. Then, ought there not to be some power given to the Boards to decide when it shall be done?—When there is accommodation wanted in a place—that is your natural basis on which to found your application for more accommodation. You cannot provide accommodation where there is already accommodation available. That would be improper.

83. As a matter of general principle, do you think the Government or the Board should have power to decide when additional accommodation is wanted in a district?—There is a standard. The Department recognises 12 square feet per child. If it is shown that there are 12 square feet per child available at a school the Department is right in objecting to an increase.

84. If it is found that there is not the 12 ft., what then?—Then make your application for an addition of a certain class. State what kind of an addition you require, send the application to the Department, and if the facts that you present show that the additional accommodation is required, the Department should at once, without waiting and making all kinds of excuses, send word to the Board that the money is available.

85. Should that not be automatically done, instead of having to depend on begging from a Minister?—I cannot see how it could be automatic beyond what I have stated.

86. *Mr. Hall.*] Will you please turn to Table A of the Committee's report for 1903, page 6. You will see at the top there is a scale of payments for maintenance at 3½ per cent. for wooden buildings. Have you got it?—Yes.

87. Say, in Auckland, a school is built of kauri. We all know that kauri lasts a very long time—very much longer than wood, say, in Hawke's Bay. You can see that if a schoolhouse of kauri costs £300 it would be a dearer house in the first instance than a similar one in Hawke's Bay. I mean to say that it would cost more for its size?—Within a few pounds more or less on either side.

88. Supposing you built a school in the North of heart of kauri at £1 the 100 ft.; such a school to accommodate a given number of children would probably cost 25 per cent. more than a similar school would in Hawke's Bay?—I do not think the difference is so great between the various schools. I am taking the amount for the colony. I have taken your own values, and I have divided the amount over a term of years, and it is as I have stated.

89. But say a school would cost more if built of kauri, the lasting properties of the kauri school would be greater?—Yes; but you are taking a special case. I have said that the average life of a school over the whole colony is thirty years.

90. But you have said there should be differential rates, according to the lasting qualities of the timber?—No.

91. Well, I believe, myself, that a school in the Auckland District that would cost £300 there would cost £250 in Hawke's Bay?—I doubt it.

92. But good kauri is worth considerably more in Auckland. On the scale of 3½ per cent. the Auckland school would get £10 10s. every year for its maintenance?—Pardon me, but I have taken them for the colony. I do not want Auckland to receive any more in the way of capitation for the erection of a school building than any other district in New Zealand. The Government bases its estimates upon an average capitation allowance. It has the Public Works Department as a stand-by to see to the value of buildings. It has had experience in the erection of Native schools, and it has all these things available throughout the colony.

93. We will suppose that an Education Board says, "We will build our schools of the very best material; we will build them of the heart of every timber; everything shall be of the best." The Board may make a school to cost even 33 per cent. more than another Education Board would, and yet the basis on which the maintenance was paid would be 3½ per cent. on the cost?—I do not think there would be the slightest difference if you adopted the plan suggested. The plan that you are suggesting here is simply a plan of differentiating the cost of buildings, both as to quality and size.

94. And you believe in differentiating?—I am talking of averages. In the erection of a building the best thing that the Government can provide for a district in the first place should be provided. You would not give, for example, second-class timber in one district and first-class timber in another. I am stating what is the average cost of making school-provision throughout the colony, not in one district.

95. If you will listen to me for a moment you will see what I mean: Different Education Boards could get differential grants in regard to maintenance. They get 3½ per cent. upon the cost of the building for its maintenance. If one puts up a building at £300 and another a building at £250, with the same accommodation for children, there will be a difference every year in the maintenance grant of £1 15s.—the difference between £8 15s. and £10 10s.?—There would not be a difference if the Government had its type of school and the work was carried out as it ought to be.