

having to apply to the Government before it could do a little bit of work like the building of an outhouse? Do you know that there has been any difficulty of the kind?—I do not know that. I am sorry to hear it in the case of Canterbury, because I might say that Canterbury is the most generous of all the Education Boards in the matter of giving help to school districts.

119. With regard to the question put to you by Sir William Russell, do I understand that your proposal relates only to extensions and not to new buildings?—Extensions and new buildings, because an extension to my mind occupies exactly the same position as a new building. "Extension" implies that an increase of school-space is required, and wherever there is an increase of school-space required there should be no question as to a grant for that place.

120. I understand, with regard to additional accommodation required—?—That is, school-extension in consequence of an increase in average attendance.

121. School-extension in consequence of an increase in average attendance—that there should be some system under which, if there was an increase in average attendance, there should be automatically an additional grant?—Exactly. Even that is shown by the quarterly returns of attendance. If the same conditions exist with regard to attendance as exist in connection with staffing, then that should be evidence on behalf of the Board that extension is necessary.

122. How can you apply that in the case of a new building in a new district, because there is no average attendance there at all?—Let the Inspector go to the place and make all inquiries himself. Then he can make his recommendation to his Board, and show which type of school in his opinion ought to be placed there—whether it should be a grade-1, a grade-2, or a grade-3 school. What I mean by grading here is this: In some districts there will never be need for a school to accommodate more than thirty, and an Inspector should exercise his judgment, from the experience which he has had, as to the possibilities of an increase in the district.

123. Do you mean that the moment the report of an Inspector is received as to the requirements of a new district where there is no school, the grant should be immediately made upon that report?—The grants should only be made every half-year. These things should be dealt with then, because population does not increase at such a rapid rate as that. Of course, the evidence in new districts would be different from the evidence with regard to an extension.

124. I understand that; but do you advise there should be no further inquiry by any officers of the Government?—The Inspector is an officer of the Government.

125. He is an officer of the Board?—I take it that he is also an officer of the Government, doing his duty for the good of the country. He is perfectly independent. He receives his instructions to go and visit a school and he reports as he thinks proper.

126. Your recommendation is that his report should be acted upon by the Government?—Not necessarily. It should be sent to the Board.

127. And if the Board approves it should be acted upon without any further inquiry by the Government?—Here in this room you have a body of gentlemen capable of inquiring.

128. But this Committee does not sit all the year round?—I hope you will.

129. Are you aware that such a thing as this has happened, that application has been made by a Board for a grant for two schools in a district where only one was required?—That ought not to occur. There must be something occurring which ought not to occur.

130. *Mr. Fowlds.*] Of course, if we had perfect Inspectors and perfect Boards we could leave the whole thing to be done in the way suggested by Mr. Hill; but what we are trying to do is to arrive at some principle whereby these grants for new schools, extensions, and everything else shall be made automatically, in the direction indicated by Sir William Russell; but I understand you do not think it could be worked, except under the report of the Inspector as to the local conditions?—I see no plan of giving a grant to a district unless upon the facts which are presented in that district. I would set my face definitely against building a school in a district when the attendance would be below twenty, but I would give a building capitation allowance. The Hawke's Bay Education Board did that for many years, and it fostered self-reliance in a marvellous way. I am satisfied this is the best plan to adopt, because of the necessarily heavy expense when a public body goes in for building. The district adopts the plan for the time being and says, "You give us a certain capitation and we will take care to build a school approved by yourselves, but we will watch over the interests of the district ourselves."

131. Do you think that the Education Board is the best body to deal with special circumstances like that, or the Education Department?—I am entirely in favour of local government, and I think a Board has the opportunity of knowing more about the district with which it is specially concerned than the Education Department.

132. You do not think it would be possible to work on an average taken over a number of years by simply making an allocation to each district for new buildings or extensions, on the basis of the increase in average attendance in that particular district?—If you could tell when children were going to be born, then you could do that. You do not know where they are going to be located, and unless you can form a basis such as that you cannot anticipate a school in one district and not in another. If the district requires a school by average attendance, provide it. That is my view.

133. You mean a small school district—not an educational district?—Just so.

134. I take it you consider that the chances of extension in the number of pupils are such that it would not work out on a fair basis to allocate the grants on the increase in average attendance?—It would be absolutely impossible.

135. With reference to repairs, you reckon that the Maintenance Account ought to bear the cost of such small alterations as have been suggested by Mr. Allen—the erection of a new porch or new closets, or alterations to class-rooms?—The maintenance grant should provide for all such things.

136. This is the point: Is it possible that Education Boards might spend unduly in that direction and leave such essential work as painting in abeyance, to the general loss of the State