

It should have been understood. Everything has been drifting, and naturally under such conditions, with Committees and Boards and everybody else it has been simply a game of grab.

153. Of course, there are a great many cases, and I have no doubt a good deal of irritation has been caused in many districts by repeated refusals. Now, take the case of Tolago Bay. You know that case?—Very well.

154. There was a long discussion with your Board on the subject?—Yes.

155. The Government many years ago gave a grant for putting into order the Native school at Tolago Bay and then handing it over to the Board in a complete condition, upon the understanding that the Native children were in future to be provided for by the Board at the same school as the European children. They were all to attend it. Applications have since been made for additions to that school, and it appears that the money that was given to the Board for enlarging that school in order to make it a Native and public school was not definitely used for that purpose, but that what had been an old shelter-shed was put up alongside the school and was called a class-room; and it was on account of that becoming utterly unsuitable that the grant for an addition was applied for. Do you remember that case?—I remember it very well.

156. That is just an instance?—If you see my letters on the question, you will see that I grumbled and pronounced all kinds of anathemas against the Department for allowing such a state of affairs to exist, because there is the very condition that you mentioned in your first statement.

157. But that is an instance where an application has been made to the Government for a special grant in order to improve accommodation that has been put up by the Board?—It was a Native school originally.

158. Is the Department bound to provide now for all the deficiencies in the buildings that have been put up by the Boards in the past?—That is a most extraordinary question, pardon me for saying it. If accommodation is wanted, I do not care if it is for Natives or Europeans, it should be provided. It is not a question of how the school came under the Board. The Board did what they thought best at the time, and there was no accommodation there. They had to use a shed, or spend money in utilising a shed for a school, which was a disgrace to any Department. Eventually, after my grumbling for years and drawing attention, year after year when I went to the district, to the state of affairs, the Board did erect an addition, and I commend the Board for it. I think they acted most properly.

159. Then, where schools which were put up by the Boards were originally of defective design, and the increase in the attendance is now showing the defective structure—?—There is no defective design in this school. The design is suitable for ordinary work, and the building is worked in at the present time. All the school-work is carried on there. The only alteration that has been made is that the wretched shed that was there has been taken away; and quite right, too.

160. You said that the condition of the Dannevirke School was a disgrace to the Government?—I did.

161. Do you remember that three years ago the Board was authorised to expend some £300 or £400 on that school?—No. If that amount was authorised it was to make provision for secondary work—to make provision for the use of the school as a district high school, and not to make extension for the requirements of the school-children.

162. But it was in order to enlarge the primary school?—We made the addition and spent about £500, but the Government will not give us a penny of it. I am stating what our secretary says—that the Board cannot get anything from the Department on this work.

163. Take the case of the Woodville School. You applied in June for £240?—Yes.

164. And you were told that the total floor-space was already more than adequate for the number of children attending the school?—I have not seen the memorandum from the Department, and I know nothing about it. I know there was an application made for a grant in order to extend the building with a view to providing accommodation for the secondary class, but I have not heard from the Board as to whether there was any reply.

165. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] I would point out that going on the basis of the average attendance very often makes a school horribly overcrowded. If you only provide floor-space for the number of children who attend on the average, when you get the maximum attendance the school is overcrowded?—There is another question I would like to draw attention to, and that is with regard to the peculiar position taken up by the Department in granting only 12 square feet per child for a secondary class. To me it is a marvellous thing. The present arrangement in our schools is like putting a mustard plaster upon a human being in a wrong place. There is no system in connection with these secondary classes. No provision is made, and we want accommodation for those children. If you are going to have a district high school you want extra provision. Take the amount per head provided for a secondary school, and compare it with the amount for the primary schools.

*Mr. J. Allen:* I do not think we need go any further into that.

166. *Sir Edward Gibbes.*] The question is, how is the Government to ascertain accurately what is the position?—I have stated how the thing should be done.

167. You said the Inspectors should report?—You have the method of dividing the money.

168. I am speaking of the distribution of the special grant?—I have simply made a suggestion that it should be a capitation basis. I see no difficulty if you will follow out the plan of finding out what is wanted before you make your vote.

169. But how is the Department to find out the accuracy of what is represented to us? I will give you an instance that occurred yesterday. An application was made for the extension of a school, and it was stated there were eighty-two children within three miles of the school who were not now attending it. Well, of course, that was taken to mean that those children wanted accommodation—that they could not get into the school because there was no room for them.