

tained in a school may appear sufficient, while in actual practice it may be found that the whole area cannot be fully utilised, owing to the disposition of the several classes causing a wastage. Further, the Board submits that the new departure will inevitably have an unfortunate effect on School Committees and teachers. When it becomes generally known that the final decision does not rest with the local authority, those immediately concerned will naturally demand that their wishes shall be made known to the Department, in the hope that the Board's judgment in setting aside their applications may be reversed. This will lead to much inconvenience, as there are many cases to be dealt with each year, some of which are of a nature requiring that prompt attention which a reference to the Department and the observance of formalities practically prohibit. [NOTE.—In two recent cases the petitioners have notified their intention to appeal to the Department.] (2.) While the Board desires freedom of action when dealing with applications for additions, it does not follow that a larger grant than that recommended in the aggregate (£8,600) by the Education Committee is required. There is reason to believe that with a slight readjustment of the amounts available under the several headings this vote (with special grants for new schools) would prove sufficient. The cost of maintenance might be reduced from $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 3 per cent., making a saving of £824 per annum (£624 on schools and £200 on residences). Then, the average life of a well-built school—and a majority of the buildings in North Canterbury may be so described—is probably rather more than thirty-five years. If a $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of a 10 per cent. allowance were made for rebuilding and renewals of wood buildings of thirty and under thirty-five years old, an additional saving of approximately £113 would be effected, setting free altogether about £937 per annum for general purposes, including additions. If expenditure must be strictly in accordance with the allocation of votes for specific purposes, it will be necessary for contractors to tender separately for repairs to schools and residences. The Board would suggest that the votes in regard to schools and residences should be taken as one, to be used for either the one or the other as may be thought fit. In the case of reinstatement of school buildings destroyed by fire it is not quite clear what contribution the Department would make. Supposing a school over thirty-six years old should be destroyed this year, the Board having received 5 per cent. by way of sinking fund, what would the Department grant to assist in reinstatement? (3.) During the present year the Board has expended something like £1,420 to which exception may be taken by the Audit Office as not being in strict accordance with the terms under which the votes were passed. Of the larger of these works, Oxford East (rebuilding house) and Spreydon (addition to school) were contracted for previous to the 31st December, 1903; while of the expenditure on the Lower Kaituna School, £150 was granted some years ago by the Department for a school there. The expenditure on new school, Kaituna (Upper), on the addition to school at Darfield, and on removing school from Hinds to Carew appeared to the Board to be necessary and justifiable. The Board would ask the Education Committee to recommend that expenditure of this kind should be passed." That is the short letter I have prepared as supplementing any evidence I might give this morning.

3. *Mr. Buddo.*] Have your Board tried to carry out the provisions of the regulation that was circulated in February last?—Yes, to a large extent.

4. Have they in any case felt that there was a hardship inflicted on certain pupils in certain schools in their district, by the delay necessitated by applying to the Department for the necessary grant, and the refusal that followed?—Yes. The Board are distinctly of opinion that if the procedure outlined in the recommendation of last year is adhered to, it will result in a good deal of inconvenience. They have a large number of applications for new schools, or additions to schools, or additions to teachers' houses each year. Some of these are of a fairly urgent nature, and it follows of necessity that application to the Department, with all the formalities that have to be gone through, will lead to delay, for while these things are being done time will be going on, and probably some three or four months will be taken up. I have here a list of applications for new schools or for additions during the last year. There appear to be about twenty-four cases.

5. Could you summarise the general requirements of the Committees? Are those applications for additions or are they for alterations to existing buildings?—I have them here in detail. I could read them out.

6. It would be well, in order to show the Board's work for the year, that you should do so?—"List of applications for new school buildings or additions, 1904: Ashley Gorge—Addition to school; not yet dealt with. Mayfield—Addition to school; declined by Board. Waltham—Addition to school; declined by Department. Carew—New school; granted by removal of Hinds side. Ladbrooks—Addition to school; declined by Department. Addington—Addition to school; declined by Department. Bromley—Addition to house; declined by Board. Kincaid Downs—New school; declined by Department. Templeton—Addition to school; forwarded to Department. Lowcliffe—Addition to house; refused by Board (small). Rakaia North—New school; agreed to forward to Department conditionally. Waikuku—Addition to school; declined by Board. Eyretton—Addition to school; under consideration. Kaituna Upper—New school; granted by Board. Kaituna Lower—New school; granted by Board. Kaituna Lower—New house; granted by Board. Fairton—New house; declined by Board. Le Bon's Bay Upper—New school; declined by Board. Port Hills—New school; under consideration. Lyndon No. 1—New school; declined by Board. Leeston—Addition to house; declined by Board. Linwood—New school; declined by Board. Belfast—Addition to house; declined by Board. Omihi—Addition to school; under consideration." In two of these cases—Linwood and Rakaia North—the petitioners have intimated their intention of appealing to the Government, saying they are not satisfied with the Board's decision. Probably that will happen in most cases.

7. Taking the number of applications that your Board receives, do you think the Department can as effectually deal with applications as the Boards of the colony?—No, I think not, as mentioned in my letter. I think that the members of a Board and the Inspectors possess between them both the theoretical and the practical knowledge necessary to come to a proper judgment.