

The Inspectors are the Boards' experts. They have all the theoretical knowledge that any one can have, and in addition the members of the Board who visit, as you know, the districts, have a practical knowledge of the district and of the district's requirements.

8. Is there any case that you can speak of from memory in which an application for a new school in a new district has been declined by the Department, after urgent representations having been made by the Board that it was necessary to provide a school there?—Yes. The Board has one case of that kind. I may say that it is the only case this year, I think, in which the Board has applied for a new school. The Board did not make the application until it was quite satisfied that a new school was required. That is the case of Kincaid Downs.

9. How long is it since the Board took up the question of making application for a new school there?—The application for a school there must be over two years old now, but owing to negotiations having to be entered into between the Board and the owner of the probable site, a good deal of delay arose. Speaking from memory, I should think it would be about the beginning of this year when the application to the Department was sent in.

10. Do your Board feel themselves hampered by the regulations issued by the Department with regard to alterations and additions to schools?—They do not, I think, as regards alterations. Alterations of any extent are not often effected, and I do not think the Department would at all object to any expenditure under that heading being included in maintenance, such as the erection or the removal of a partition. The difficulty refers more to additions to schools and additions to teachers' houses.

11. As to these cases of applications for additions to schools: are they cases in which there is sufficient space in the school for the total number of children, provided the class-rooms were suitable, or are they cases in which, by a readjustment of the population, as it were, the infant department or the higher classes require more space than they did in former years?—In some cases the whole space available is not sufficient for the number of children. In other cases, like Templeton, for instance, which case is now under the Department's consideration, it is more the disposition of the classes than the total area of floor-space. The floor-space available as a whole is sufficient for all the children in the school, but the Inspectors are of opinion that the school cannot be properly worked owing to the smaller of the two rooms—the infant-room—not being large enough to contain all the infants, while the large room is not large enough for the infants and the others.

12. Taking two typical cases—Templeton and Ladbrook's—in coming to a decision were the Board guided by the representations made by their Inspector after the annual examination?—In the case of Ladbrook's, some of the members of the Board visited the district, and, I think, after some little hesitation they decided to make application to the Department. In this case I think the Board are satisfied with the decision of the Department that the addition is not actually necessary.

13. That would not be so with regard to Templeton?—No. The application for the addition at Templeton has not yet been definitely replied to by the Department. In this case the Inspectors have made the recommendation that to work the school properly the addition is needed.

14. To summarise your remarks, they are generally to the effect that the regulations issued last February are detrimental to the best working of the Board, by causing delay and not only inconvenience in the working of the staff of the schools, but also overcrowding in some cases?—You speak of the regulations; which do you refer to?

15. Specially those of February last?—Issued on the recommendation of this Committee?

16. These regulations, I think, embodied a recommendation by the Committee?—That is the point that the North Canterbury Board are in difficulty about. By the circular of the 17th February the Department requested the Board to spend the grant in strict accordance with the Committee's recommendations, and when the Board turns to the Committee's recommendations as set out in the parliamentary paper it cannot discover that the Committee made any such recommendation as would authorise the omission of additions from the items of expenditure enumerated here. The report states that the Committee found that the special vote for school buildings in newly settled districts had been applied for by the Boards and dealt with by the Department, and it recommended that the system thus outlined should be adhered to. But the system hitherto in vogue everywhere in New Zealand has been that the Boards have been at perfect liberty to make additions to teachers' houses or small additions to schools out of the ordinary general fund. That, however, is now stopped by the letter from the Department enumerating the purposes for which the grant should be used, and one of those purposes is not additions to buildings.

17. *Mr. Hall.*] When your Board make a recommendation to the Government for a new school, does your Inspector also report as to the necessity for it?—On the form provided for the Board there is special provision for the Inspector's report, and, of course, an application would be incomplete unless the form were filled up.

18. I suppose you take your Inspector's evidence before you send a report to the Government?—Yes. The evidence of the Inspectors is, as a rule, contained in one of their reports—either their inspection or examination reports. For instance, in the case of Templeton the Board hesitated in making an application, and it was not until Mr. Inspector Wood reported that the addition was necessary and that the application should go on that the Board did make application. In the case of the overcrowding at Waltham, the Inspectors in their report very strongly emphasized the necessity for another room.

19. Have you any instance where your Board have recommended the Government to erect a school but the Inspector's report has been against it?—No. I do not think the Board would forward an application if the Inspectors were not in favour of it. As far as I can remember, no application has been forwarded which the Inspectors have objected to.

20. You spoke of the life of a school as being thirty-five years. Do you mean a wooden school?—I am speaking of the North Canterbury schools, not schools generally, because I do not know sufficient about the schools in other districts. The majority of the schools in North Canterbury