

32. That is the object of the regulation. You modify the term "maintenance." I mean that there should be some sum specially allocated which the Board would not be entitled to use as they did before, for general building purposes?—I think that while, in estimating the sums to go to each Board, several headings should be taken, like maintenance of school buildings, rebuilding school buildings, maintenance of teachers' residences, and rebuilding teachers' residences, while there is no objection to an estimate being formed by splitting up the whole into four like that; still, I think the Board should be at liberty to use the grants for one purpose or the other. For instance, in the matter of repairs, it will be very difficult to keep expenditure on repairs to schools separate from repairs to teachers' houses. A contract almost invariably includes both. As I mention in my letter, it will be necessary for separate contracts to be let. So I think the Boards should be given a free hand in the expenditure of their general funds, while there is no objection at all to the estimates being made separately.

33. I want to know whether you approve of the general principle which is embodied in the recommendation of the Committee—namely, that the Boards are to be given so-much money, which it is to be understood they are to be at liberty to apply to maintenance, and nothing else, whether it is maintenance of teachers' residences or school buildings?—If there is to be no sum set apart for additions—

34. We will come to additions. I want to know whether you approve of something being set apart for maintenance, to be used for maintenance alone?—The question arises, what constitutes maintenance?

35. As it is already defined?—I think the putting-up of, say, a scullery ought to be included in maintenance.

36. That is your opinion—that you should include additions in maintenance?—Small additions.

37. I was going to come to that; but that would not affect the general principle?—No.

38. And I want to know whether you approve of the principle?—Yes; but as I set out in this memorandum, it would require to be reconsidered from time to time, as the ages of the buildings would vary.

39. You mean to say that there should be revaluations of the buildings made from time to time?—It would not do to make a hard-and-fast rule and keep to it for years and years. It would be necessary to revalue periodically.

40. That would not affect the general principle?—No.

41. I understand that you think it a good thing that there should be a principle of this kind, under which the Boards will have moneys which they can use for maintenance only?—I think that if you could arrive at a percentage on the cost of construction, such an allowance would be a fair one.

42. That is a detail as to how the principle should be worked out. Of the principle you approve?—Yes.

43. Coming to the basis upon which it is worked out, which is another point, I understand you approve generally of the basis here—that is to say, that the grant should be based on a percentage on the cost of construction of the buildings, rather than on any system of capitation. I think you have already indicated that?—Capitation on the attendance.

44. On the average attendance?—Yes. Well, the attendance is a fluctuating basis.

45. Very well. I understand that the objection you now have to the regulations is chiefly with regard to moneys required for additions?—Yes, chiefly so. It also in some degree has regard to small schools, like, for instance, that asked for at Kincaid Downs. The cost involved there would not be very much, and yet the Board's hands are tied. It cannot satisfy the demands of the residents.

46. What suggestion have you to make in order to have placed at the disposal of the Board a sum sufficient for additions and small schools such as you mention?—In the matter of provision for new schools?

47. I understand you say that it is chiefly as regards additions and the erection of small schools that difficulty will arise?—Yes. Well, I think that where the need for a school is created by, for instance, a Government settlement—and it has arisen entirely owing to a settlement having been made in a district—I think that in these cases the Department should make a special grant. But I do not think that should apply to additions to existing schools. I think money for them should come out of the Board's general funds.

48. I want to get at whether you think a limit should be placed upon the amount that is to be available for additions, because if you allow a sum for maintenance and that sum is to cover additions and the erection of new schools, too much may be absorbed for these purposes?—Yes, it may. It depends on the administration of the Board. There is no doubt that is so.

49. Can you make any suggestion as to how that difficulty can be got over?—I think by having certain defined restrictions—for instance, that no new school be granted unless the Inspectors were entirely favourable; also that if there were other schools within a certain radius a school should not be granted without reference to the Department. Some restrictions of that kind might be placed upon the Boards.

50. The difficulty with the present regulations is that sums are required for small additions. I want to know whether you have any proposal to offer to meet this position, and whether you would approve of a suggestion, say, to allow to each Board a small sum not to exceed a certain amount, as a supplementary fund—in addition to what is allowed for maintenance—in order to make additions?

The Chairman: Mr. Lane proposes that the extra $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. should be used for that purpose.

Witness: I have a statement here showing, as far as our Board is concerned, the average cost of additions over the last three years. The average cost per year was £1,028; so that if the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. that I mentioned were released it would almost cover that. The $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would be about £900—not quite £900.