

report of the Committee has evidently been drawn up by some one with expert knowledge. The only variation I suggest—

110. I am talking of the principle?—Yes; the principle, I think, is all right.

111. Then, you object to some of the details. What do you object to?—In the case of North Canterbury I think the average life of a school is more than thirty-five years—perhaps forty.

112. You think we should differentiate between North Canterbury and other places with respect to maintenance and rebuilding, because of your better conditions?—I do not think I could advocate a separate principle being applied.

113. If we found that in other districts it would require $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for maintenance and only 3 per cent. in North Canterbury, do you not think it would be right that we should make that differentiation?—Then, you would make the North Canterbury Board suffer for having administered its affairs well in the past. The districts in which the schools have not been properly looked after must inevitably suffer, whatever basis you take, unless it is the granting of applications as they come along. I do not see how we can get away from it. It is just the same with our School Committees, owing to the mismanagement of their predecessors, and the Board cannot help them.

114. Do you ascribe the difference to mismanagement, or to climatic or other conditions differing?—I would not like to say "mismanagement." I do not know sufficient of the affairs of the several Boards to say that; but I do know that in some cases moneys have been used for, for instance, technical purposes in some districts.

115. Primary-education moneys?—Moneys granted in the past—ordinary moneys.

116. Where has that been done?—I think it has been done in Wellington. I am not referring now to the past year or two.

117. You say that primary-education money has been used for technical purposes?—I do not distinctly say that, but that is the general understanding—that the Wellington Board has used its general moneys for, for instance, technical purposes.

118. Upon what authority do you say that?

Objection was raised to this question, and the Chairman ruled that it was unwise to go further into the question of the authority.

119. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Has your Board at any time ever used any primary-school money for technical education?—Might I say, Mr. Chairman, that I did not say it was wrong of the Board to do so.

120. *The Chairman.*] Answer the question, will you, please, Mr. Lane?—The Board may have used a few pounds. I should have to look into the balance-sheets. The Board may have been a few pounds to the bad over the technical classes. I should like to say that I did not mean to convey the meaning that the moneys spent by the Wellington or any other Board had been wrongly used. It is open for any Board to use the money for technical purposes, but it was a question of policy and as to whether it was wise to do so. Take, for instance, the Auckland Board: they have a director at £500, a year, and where do they get the money from?

121. *The Chairman.*] We do not want to deal with any other Board?—The North Canterbury Board may have spent a few pounds, but it would be a bagatelle.

122. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Was that part of the old building fund?—No, it would be part of the ordinary funds, not the building funds.

123. What is the distinction?—It would have come out of the ordinary capitation grant.

124. Have you read the report of the Committee of last year—1.-13 [Document shown to witness]?—Not all of this. This [Document produced] was the paper sent to the Board. It deals with the allocation of ordinary and special votes for school buildings, but it has no number.

125. It contains what I want to get at. You will see from paragraph 14 there that the Committee, in making their recommendation, foresaw that it would be necessary to revise the rates of payment allowed on the buildings from time to time?—Yes.

126. So that the report of the Committee is not to be considered as a hard-and-fast thing, fixed for all time?—No.

127. We recognised that things would have to be revised from time to time?—Yes.

128. With regard to rebuilding, you said that so far as North Canterbury was concerned you considered that for buildings over thirty years of age the Committee had recommended too high a rate in 10 per cent., and that $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would do you. Is that so?—I think that $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would be a fair provision for schools from thirty to thirty-five years old.

129. You referred to your own district only?—Only my own district.

130. *Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] Do you think that the knowledge of the central office here, with its present staff and its mode of ascertaining the wants of remote districts, is as good as the knowledge possessed by Education Boards, with their staffs of Inspectors and the wide local knowledge of the members of the Boards?—No—that is, the Boards and the Inspectors are in a better position to judge. The Department's knowledge is theoretical as regards any actual case.

131. Regarding new buildings, has your Board been interfered with by the central Government in its decision as to where a building should go?—As to the site?

132. Yes?—Well, the question of a site was connected with the Kincaid Downs application, but it was more another point—it was a question as to whether the 2 acres should be taken from a resident. It was not that the Department thought another site more suitable than the one the Board had chosen.

133. What class of officer has the Board now to send out to gain information if it disapproves of the site selected by the Government?—The practice with the North Canterbury Board is for some two or more members to go themselves, drive through the district and meet the residents, make themselves acquainted with the locality, and ascertain, after consulting with these people, what the best site is. The architect as a rule accompanies them.