

might so happen that the case was so urgent that the Board would reluctantly set apart some money to build the school, and thereby lessen the money available for maintenance; but I think that it ought not to be so urgent as that. The Board would have existing schools to look after, and its duty would be to maintain them, and it would be very careful not to go in for new schools unless they were very urgently wanted.

195. I am putting an urgent case, of children growing up without having any possibility of getting any education. That is the case on the one hand for a new building. The case on the other hand is painting, say, at the proper interval?—The number of children concerned would have something to do with it. If only a small number of children were concerned, the Board would think perhaps that the money could not be spared. If a large number of children were concerned, the Board might prefer to erect the new school.

196. Let us say there were twenty children, then?—I am sure that if the Board had schools that had not been painted for fifteen years it would say it had not any money for even an urgent case.

197. Have you acquired any knowledge of the comparative cost of education—that is, in proportion to the population—in the other colonies on the one hand and in New Zealand on the other?—No, I have no information on that point.

198. If I remember rightly, you mentioned in connection with maintenance the case of the Templeton School, where the Inspectors had declared that the class-rooms were so small for certain of the classes that certain alterations were necessary?—The building was so inconvenient that an addition was necessary.

199. In what category would you put that, if the Board was put to the cost of altering the relative size of the rooms without increasing the size of the whole building—in the category of maintenance or enlargement?—In this case the size of the building would have been increased. If it were an alteration not increasing the area, then it would be a matter of pure maintenance, I think.

200. *Mr. Buddo.*] By taking the Board's expenditure for one year, would you consider that you had a fair basis to go on for arriving at an estimate of the Board's average expenditure?—No.

201. Would you be surprised to learn that a statement was made to this Committee that only 1s. 9d. per head of average attendance was expended on maintenance in 1902?—That statement might be correct, but it would require explanation.

202. Can you give any reason why that was so?—Yes. For 1903 the average cost per head for maintenance in North Canterbury worked out at 1s. 9d., but this was entirely owing to the fact that during the previous two years a much larger expenditure had been incurred, and the Board was obliged to reduce its expenditure. It had to keep within the vote.

203. What would you consider the average for those three years?—The Board's average for the three years was nearly 5s. per head.

204. *Mr. Hardy.*] I would like to ask Mr. Lane whether he knows of any case in which the North Canterbury Board of Education asked the residents to contribute towards the erection of schools, or the purchase of land for the erection of schools?—Yes, there have been a number of cases. That is usually what the Board does in the case of an application from a small district—it asks the residents whether they are prepared to assist.

205. In the case of that school at the Peninsula the residents subscribed—was it not £50?—The Kaituna Upper residents subscribed £50 and presented the Board with a site—less survey expenses—and also agreed to fence it.

206. Do you know of any other instance of a district erecting a school for itself which is now used by the Board?—Yes, there was a similar case at Awaroa three or four years ago. The residents there found the ground and erected the building. Subsequently the Board helped them, I think, in a little expenditure required for finishing off.

207. Do you know of a custom which has arisen in North Canterbury, in connection with the erection of small schools, to ask from the residents at least the ground for the erection of the school?—That is the Board's practice—to ascertain if the residents can find the land. In some cases it is done, and in others they are not able to do it. In the case of all small districts the Board asks the residents to guarantee that the teacher's salary shall not fall below a certain minimum.

208. I should like you to make it plain to the Committee as to the custom with the North Canterbury Board of members going out to look over the district themselves?—On an application being received for a school in any district the Board's practice is invariably to appoint some two or more of its members to visit the district and make themselves acquainted with the facts of the case. The residents are required to furnish a map of the locality, to furnish a list of the names of the children of school age and under, and to mark on this tracing the positions of the houses of the residents, so that the Board may determine—firstly, whether a school is necessary, and, secondly, where it should be placed.

209. And it is really the practice of the Board to rely more on its own judgment than on the expert evidence which is always brought to bear in coming to a decision regarding our schools?—It pays regard to the opinion of its Inspectors.

210. Yes; but do you know of any instance in which the Board has erected a school without first sending out members of the Building Committee to view the ground and then report?—No.

211. And their reports are usually backed up by the expert evidence—of necessity they are generally so backed up?—They are backed up by the facts of the case.

212. With regard to additions to a school at Hanmer, do you know of any friction having arisen between the Department and the Board of Education about that?—Yes. I am afraid the case of Hanmer Plains had rather slipped my memory when a question was put to me a little while ago. This was the case of an addition, not a new school, and I do not know whether the