

question applied to such a case. The Board was quite satisfied and its Inspectors were quite satisfied that the accommodation was sufficient for the attendance. An application was made direct by the School Committee to the Government, and the Department intimated its willingness to make a grant. I may say that the Chairman of the School Committee has recently stated that the attendance has increased and that the school is full. This being so he has asked the Board to apply, and the Board has agreed to forward the application on.

213. That is not the point. It is this: Some friction arose between the Board of Education and the Department over that school?—There was a difference of opinion.

214. Was the position that the Department took up borne out by the facts, or the position that the Board took up?—The latter unquestionably. The whole thing hinged on the number of square feet of floor-space and the cubic feet of air-space per child required in schools. The Board did not agree with the views laid down in the Department's reference in its annual report as to the space necessary, but it agreed with its Inspectors' own opinion. The Board's own Inspectors were of the opinion that the space was sufficient then.

215. *Sir Edward Gibbes.*] Will you, Mr. Lane, signify the respect in which you think the Department's circular, instructing how the last vote is to be expended, goes beyond the report of the Committee?—The circular requires the Board to make its expenditure strictly in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee, and it goes on to state what those purposes are. They are as follows: "Maintenance, renewal, and rebuilding of school buildings (including apparatus, fencing, furniture, &c.). Maintenance of school residences. Rent of buildings used for school purposes." And, inferentially, it debars the Board from using its moneys for additions to existing schools, although the recommendations of the Committee do not appear to touch that point. They deal with a system which was in existence when the Committee met, and were to the effect that the system should be adhered to. Under that system, so far as North Canterbury is concerned, in cases of schools for newly settled districts only was it at all necessary for the Board to make application to the Department. It was scarcely ever done. I say "scarcely ever" because there was one exception.

216. But, then, the amount of the money given to the Board surely regulates it—the total showing the distribution shows also how the money is allotted. For instance, £49,000 was given under certain special items?—Yes.

217. Does that not answer your question? £49,000 was given for certain purposes?—Well, in dealing with the matter the Committee set out at some length what the system then was, and it had regard to the special vote for school buildings. Perhaps I may be allowed to read this, so as to be able to speak more fully about it. "The Committee find that the special vote for school buildings has been expended in grants for new schools and for additions to existing schools to provide for increased attendance, due to new settlement or increase of population in the district." Well, now, that appears to have been based on incorrect premises to start with. It did not refer to additions to existing schools. That special vote for school buildings only had relation to schools for newly settled districts. It had no relation at all to additions to existing schools. Then the Committee set out, "All applications made by Education Boards for such grants are dealt with on their merits." As I said before, those applications were never considered necessary in ordinary cases. Then the Committee go on to recommend that "this system should be adhered to."

218. Do you think the Committee's report still allows Boards to use this money for small works?—No, because in the recommendation that is cut out.

219. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Where?—"The Committee consider that the system thus outlined should be adhered to."

220. What is that system?—"The Committee find that the special vote for school buildings has been expended in grants for new schools and for additions to existing schools to provide for increased attendance due to new settlement or increase of population in the district."

221. That does not refer to small alterations if the floor-space is not increased?—No, but there is no provision there for ordinary additions.

222. What do you mean by "ordinary additions"?—For instance, the giving of an additional room for a teacher as his family increases.

223. That is increased floor-space?—That is an addition. The erection of a scullery, or the putting-on of 10 ft. to a small school—there is apparently no provision for this, and it has handicapped the Board this last year.

224. *Sir Edward Gibbes.*] Out of what particular portion of this money could you take a sum for additions? You could not take it out of the 3½ per cent. for maintenance, could you?—So far as I am authorised to state, the amount set out here that is to come to the Board apparently this next year—£8,600—would be sufficient for all purposes.

225. If a vote were given for maintenance you could not pay for an addition out of it, could you?—That is a question. I hope it will be found that the Board can, because otherwise the North Canterbury Board will be in some little trouble.

226. If you were given a sum of £4,300 for maintenance you could not use it to make an addition, could you?—Not under the ruling conditions.

227. And if you were given another sum for rebuilding, we will say, £1,000, you could not use that for an addition?—Not if it were specially earmarked for rebuilding.

228. And if you were given another sum for rebuilding of residences you could not use that for making an addition to a school?—No.

229. So where are you going to get the money from?—That is what I want to know.

230. Then, my point is that the Department's instruction has not gone beyond the terms of the Committee's recommendation?—No, I do not think it has. On looking into it you see that the terms which the Committee appear to have taken do not, so far as I can see, deal with the