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NEW ZEALAND.

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# EDUCATION COMMITTEE

(REPORTS OF THE), ON THE ALLOCATION OF BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE GRANTS IN CONNECTION WITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

(MR. BAUME, Chairman.)

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*Report, together with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, brought up the 2nd day of November, and ordered to be printed.*

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## ORDER OF REFERENCE.

*Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.*

FRIDAY, THE 22ND DAY OF JULY, 1904.

*Ordered*, "That a Committee be appointed to consider all matters relating to Education and public instruction generally—school-training of teachers, higher education, technical education, and manual instruction, and for such other matters effecting education as may be referred to it; to have power to call for persons and papers; five to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Baume, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Buddo, Mr. Ell, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Fowlds, Mr. A. L. D. Fraser, Mr. Graham, Mr. Hall, Mr. Hanan, Mr. Hogg, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Lethbridge, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Major, Mr. Massey, Mr. T. Mackenzie, Mr. McNab, Sir W. R. Russell, Mr. Sidey, Hon. Sir W. J. Steward, Mr. J. C. Thomson, Mr. Wood, and the mover."—(Right Hon. R. J. SEDDON.)

## REPORT.

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THE Education Committee have the honour to report that they recommend that Education Boards should have discretion to expend the ordinary grant for school buildings for any of the purposes for which such grant is now available, with the following modification—namely, That not more than 7 per cent. of such grant may, if the Board think fit, be used for the purpose of making small alterations and additions, subject to the limitation following, that is to say, that the cost of any additions for more than 200 square feet of class-room floor-space should not be paid for out of this grant in any one year for any school of Grade 8 or under, and that of not more than 400 square feet in any school over Grade 8. The Committee recommend that this report, with the evidence attached, be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

FREDERICK E. BAUME, Chairman.

Parliament Buildings,  
Wellington, 1st November, 1904.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1904.

H. HILL, Inspector of Schools for Hawke's Bay District, examined. (No. 1.)

*Mr. J. Allen:* Perhaps I had better explain to Mr. Hill what the Committee particularly desire to get at. Some trouble has arisen, Mr. Hill, owing to the action that has been taken by the Department—following the report of the Education Committee of last year—with respect to the moneys devoted to maintenance, repairs, small alterations, rebuilding, and so on, of school buildings. The particular trouble has arisen with respect to the grant for additions and new school buildings. Complaints come from some districts that the Education Boards are now limited in their sphere of action, because the maintenance-money is allotted purely for maintenance and can be used for nothing else, and the Boards have nothing wherewith to carry out small alterations, such as the erection of a porch or new class-room or closet; the only means they have of carrying out those works are by making application to the Government to get moneys out of the additions and new school buildings vote. That is the difficulty. Does the Committee desire that Mr. Hill should make a statement with respect to his experience regarding the matter, or do members wish to examine him?

*Sir W. R. Russell:* I might mention, without its being irrelevant, that Mr. Hill was, in the days of the smallness of the Education Board in Hawke's Bay, our Secretary as well as our Inspector. As it is a wide district, we have continually got him to report to us upon the necessity for new schools or for additions to schools; and therefore he has had a great experience of a sparsely settled district and an increasing district, so he ought to be able to give us his own impressions upon the subject.

1. *Mr. J. Allen.*] I do not know whether you have seen this table with respect to votes for school buildings, Mr. Hill [Table shown to witness]?—No.

2. Perhaps you had better deal with your own Board and your own experience?—I may say that I did not see even the report of the Education Committee until Sunday.

*Mr. Buddo:* Might I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to show Mr. Hill the North Canterbury Board's letter? It will perhaps open the field for him.

*Mr. J. Allen:* I do not see it here just at the moment. Perhaps you could explain what it is about.

*Mr. Buddo:* I think I could cover the ground in a few minutes. The difficulty is this, Mr. Hill: At several of the schools in North Canterbury it has been found that owing to altered circumstances the class-rooms as originally constructed are most unsuitable for the purpose they were intended to serve. The number of pupils in the higher standards went down, while the infant classes kept up their numbers, and by-and-by the infant portion of the school—that, we will say, the other class-room—became totally inadequate. In one case forty infants had to be accommodated in a room built for twenty; and another case, I believe, though not quite as bad as that, was nearly so. The Board therefore came to the conclusion that this was a state of affairs that ought to be remedied at once, and they made representations to the Department that they desired a sum for making additions to the buildings. But the Department stated that the floor-space at these schools was sufficient for the number of pupils, and that therefore no grant could be made for the purpose. That, I think, covers practically the whole of the ground. There are other circumstances which would take a long time to explain; but the two schools I refer to were both on the same footing.

3. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Perhaps you will make a statement now, Mr. Hill?—Thank you. It is a curious thing that I have, as one of the leading points in connection with the present defects that in my opinion exist regarding school buildings, this fact, that although our education system has been in operation twenty-five years no effort has yet been put forward by the central Department or the central authorities to direct Education Boards and to give them suggestions with regard to types of schools and characteristics, and types of furniture and characteristics, with a view not merely to the most efficient form of school and the most efficient form of working, but to their future alterations in case of need. It seems to me that a Council such as this Committee should really make some very vital modifications with regard to this matter, especially now that the Salaries Act has really fixed the size of school in the various districts. Then, again, it seems to me that one of the most serious defects in connection with school buildings is the irregular way in which applications for improvements, additions, and new buildings can be made. An Inspector of Schools, in order to test the efficiency of a school, goes to that school twice a year—once for inspection and once for examination. The Inspector knows everything about that school, if he is an observant man. He knows the quality of the teaching, whether the school building is in a proper state, whether the building wants painting, whether the different offices are in good condition, and the fences, and so on. He has records of all these matters. But in school affairs dealing with upkeep the School Committees send in applications at irregular times. This system is carried on under the Central Department. My point is that there should be no application sent to the central office, or even to an education office, except once in six months. There should be a time for making specific applications for grants, whether for new buildings or upkeep. The experience of twenty-five years should have taught these things, especially to the central Department, and they should have said, "Your applications must be made periodically—every six months."

4. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] Who is this—the Board?—The Board should make application to the Department. There is not that immediate hurry, because in the matter of staffing the attendance at a school has to be maintained for two consecutive quarters—that is, it is half-yearly. There is no reason, as far as I can see, why an Education Board should not send to the Department at a specified time a statement of all its building needs, along with the necessary facts, covered by the report of the Inspector, who alone, in four cases out of five, knows about these various requirements. In my district, for example, I go to the north of Napier thirty miles further than the distance between Napier and Wellington. My district extends as far as that. I do not know whether a member of my board has been to even any of the places along the east coast. Nobody can know about the needs of schools along the coast except the Inspector. Then, again, with regard to buildings, I have taken the trouble to work out here a tabulation, which deals with the point Mr. Buddo touched upon. I had to work it out in the train, and I have not tested or checked my points, but I have no doubt they are generally correct. I have taken the average attendance for each education district, and I have taken the vote.

5. For what period?—For last year—based upon the grant recommended by your Committee. I have taken that, and I have worked it out in this way—

6. *Mr. J. Allen.*] Which vote—that for maintenance?—£52,457, and also a special vote; but then that is not authorised, as far as I can see, in this circular, a copy of which I obtained yesterday at the Education Department. I am sorry to say that I have to criticize, but I suppose I may draw attention to this?

7. Certainly?—This is a circular letter that was sent to the Education Boards. I find, by the way, that two circular letters have been sent covering the same transaction; but in any case I have a copy of the circular letter that I brought from Napier, and it says, "In future"—I might say that I can understand Education Boards getting into a mess, because there is no government in a circular like this. It says, "In future"—and I take "in future" to mean "in the time to come"—"it is the intention of the Government to follow the recommendation of the Education Committee." The circular states before this that "The amount allotted to your district is" so much.

8. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] What is the date of that circular?—17th February, 1904. Then it goes on to say, "I have further to ask you that the moneys thus distributed shall be expended in strict accordance with the recommendations of the Committee and with the appropriation of Parliament. Accordingly, the purposes for which this grant" (the ordinary grant) "is available are as follows: Maintenance, removal, and rebuilding of school buildings (including apparatus, fencing, furniture, &c). Maintenance of school buildings. Rent of buildings used for school purposes." There is nothing to distinguish here as to what is meant. I take maintenance to be separate and apart from extensions and new buildings, and it should be made distinct and stated, so that an Education Board may know exactly what to do. These are the results, which I have worked out all on the same basis: For Auckland, with an average attendance of 24,919, the building vote was £12,917.

9. *Mr. J. Allen.*] The building vote?—The maintenance vote. I will take it as maintenance. I have taken the other as a special vote. It is called a special vote.

*Mr. J. Allen:* The other is the new-school-building vote.

*Mr. Buddo:* Mr. Hill is using the term usually applied to the vote.

*Witness:* If it is, then the statement is incorrect on page 3 of the Committee's report. I say that because it states there "Rebuilding of schools," which is a building vote. Then, I take the amount of £12,937 as a special building vote. I have worked it out as it is stated in the Minister's report. It says here that, with an average attendance of 24,919, the Auckland vote was £12,917. The upkeep—and by it I mean everything needed in the matter of painting, petty repairs, and such things as the Board is called upon to supply to schools—well the "upkeep," in Auckland was 5s. 0½d. per head, whilst on new buildings they spent £6,313, which amounts to 5s. 0¾d., or a total of 10s. 1¼d. per head on the average attendance. That is what Auckland has spent. Their vote amounted to 10s. 4¼d. a head.

10. *Mr. Buddo.*] Am I to understand that they have rebuilt and made additions with almost half of their vote for buildings?—That is what I am wanting to draw attention to, because I am going to deal with the Committee's facts presently. I want to show how this money has been spent irregularly, following that circular letter—that is, there has been no direction. My point is that this Committee, or whoever has authority, should specify and particularise the work for which a grant is made, and that work should be carried out, and the accounts should be audited by a Government auditor. That is my point. Taranaki has a building vote of £1,750, or at the rate of 9s. a head. I do not know why these building votes are differentiated. The upkeep was £1,229, or at the rate of 6s. 2½d. per head. New buildings, £1,509, or at the rate of 7s. 7½d. per head, the total amount per head being 13s. 10d. In the Wanganui District the average attendance was 9,867.

11. *Mr. J. Allen.* Permit me to interrupt you, Mr. Hill. Was this expenditure that you are quoting from now before the Committee's report, or after. I understand that what you are dealing with is the expenditure before the Committee's report came into effect?—I wanted to summarise—

12. But if it is before this report came into effect it is not dealing with the question before us?—I am taking the last annual report of the Minister.

13. Well, then, it is before this report came into effect, so that it does not bear upon the question?—But £52,457 is the amount authorised here. The building vote recommended was £57,659, and the amount distributed was £52,457. I will state all the facts presently. I will show you where the deductions are made.

14. *Mr. Buddo.*] As I understand, you wish to emphasize the fact that while the Boards discriminate between the expenditure the Department has not done so. That, I take it, is the point?—That is what I am wanting to bring out,

15. *Mr. J. Allen.*] There seems to be some dispute as to whether Mr. Hill's calculations are based upon this expenditure shown in this statement or the previous year's; and that point, I think, ought to be made clear, otherwise the evidence is of no value to us?—Exactly. I have taken the actual grant that was distributed—so it states from the Board's returns—of £52,457. That was the amount distributed.

16. The amounts that you have given for maintenance and rebuilding—where did you get them from?—The special grant of £12,937.

17. But how do you split that amount up—where do you get the facts from for that?—From the annual report.

18. That is where the mistake comes in. The annual report for the year does not give the splitting-up of the vote?—But it states every education district that has received it. Page 11 of the Minister's report—£52,457.

19. You had better go on in the meantime?—The facts from which all these figures are taken will be found on page 11 of the Minister's report. The average attendance in the Wanganui District was 9,867; the amount of the building vote was £4,200, or 8s. 6½d. a head; the upkeep was £2,733, or 5s. 6½d. a head; the cost of the Board's new buildings actually amounted to £6,249, or 12s. 6d. a head; the total expenditure by that district was 18s. 0½d. a head, although they had only 8s. 6d. from the Government, plus a special grant of £205. The average attendance for Wellington District was 12,800, and the vote was £5,300, or 8s. 3¼d. a head; the upkeep was £1,840, or 2s. 10½d. a head; the Board's new buildings cost £10,707, or 17s. 6d. a head; the total expenditure by the Board being £1 0s. 4½d. a head. The average attendance for Hawke's Bay was 7,081, the vote being £2,862, or at the rate of 8s. 1d. a head; the upkeep was £1,954, or 5s. 6¼d. a head; the Board's new buildings amounted to £4,632, or 13s. 1¼d. a head; the total amount spent by the Board being 18s. 7½d. per head, although they had only 8s. 1d. per head granted. For Marlborough the average attendance was 1,642; the building vote was £950, or 11s. 6½d. per head; the upkeep was £312, or 3s. 9d. per head; and the new buildings cost £515, or 6s. 3d. per head, making a total of 10s. a head. The average attendance for Nelson was 4,604, and the building vote £2,402, or 10s. 5¼d. per head; the Board spent £1,202, or 5s. 2¾d. per head, on upkeep, and £2,509, or 10s. 10¾d. per head, on new buildings, or a total expenditure of 16s. 1d. per head. Grey's average attendance was 1,352; the grant, £850, equal to 12s. 6½d. per head; the expenditure in upkeep was £548, or 8s. 1¼d., and on new buildings £268, or 3s. 11½d. per head; making a total expenditure of 12s. 0¾d. per head. In Westland the average attendance was 938; the grant £845, or 18s. 0¼d. per head; upkeep took £748, or 15s. 11¼d. per head; and nothing was spent on new school buildings. North Canterbury's average attendance was 16,172, and the building grant £7,255, or 8s. 11½d. per head; on upkeep the amount spent was 1s. 9d. per head, and on new buildings £3,338, or 4s. 1½d. per head, or a total of 5s. 10½d. per head. In South Canterbury the average attendance was 4,280, and the building grant £2,034, or 9s. 6d. per head; £1,064, or 4s. 11½d. per head, was spent on upkeep; £954, or 4s. 5½d., on new buildings; making a total of 9s. 5d. spent per pupil in average attendance. In Otago the average attendance was 17,234, and the grant £7,523, or 8s. 8¾d. per head; £5,146, or 5s. 11½d. per head, was spent on upkeep, and £5,611, or 6s. 6d. per head, on new buildings; or a total of 12s. 5½d. altogether. Southland's average attendance was 8,200, and the grant £3,569, or 8s. 8¾d. per head; upkeep took £1,837, or 4s. 5¾d. per head, and new buildings £3,320, or 8s. 1¼d. per head; or a total expenditure of 12s. 6d. per head on the average attendance. Summarising these totals we have—average attendance for New Zealand, 113,047; grant, £52,457, or 9s. 3¼d. per head; upkeep, £27,324, or 4s. 10d. per head; new buildings, £45,935, or 8s. 1½d. per head; total expenditure by Boards, 12s. 11½d. per head, or 3s. 8½d. per head on average attendance in excess of the grant made. In other words, Education Boards spent £73,259, whilst the Committee recommended on their basis of requirements £57,659, and only £52,457 was actually granted to the Education Boards.

20. *Mr. Buddo.*] It occurs to me that Mr. Hill is quoting the figures for 1903-4, and the table we have before us is for 1902-3, so that Mr. Hill is quoting the figures for a year later?—I am a year later than you are.

*Mr. Buddo.* The figures with regard to attendance quoted by Mr. Hill are most certainly a year later than those we have in the statement.

*Mr. J. Allen.* I understand from Sir Edward Gibbes that this amount of £52,457, which was given to the Boards this current year, was not distributed in accordance with the Committee's report. They did not get instructions until it was so late that they could not ask the Boards to spend this money in accordance with the Committee's report. That is what Sir Edward Gibbes says.

*Sir Edward Gibbes.* The Boards' expenditure shown in those tables is the Boards' expenditure for 1903. The Committee's recommendation was not announced to the Boards until the beginning of this year, and they got the money in accordance with the Committee's report at the beginning of this year, and, of course, the results of their expenditure are not yet known.

*Mr. Buddo.* I want to point out that the objection of the North Canterbury Board to the Committee's finding is this: The Committee include in the grants, which can only be had by application to the Department, the matter of additions to buildings. That is what is practically stopping the North Canterbury Education Board from making additions to old buildings.

21. *Mr. J. Allen.*] I will ask Mr. Hill to come to the Committee's report. You have seen this report of last year, Mr. Hill, which embraces an allowance for maintenance of school buildings?—Yes.

22. It also embraces a fund for rebuilding, and the rebuilding of teachers' residences, and so on. They are all itemised?—Yes.

23. Then you have seen the table showing the allocation of the money?—Yes.

24. The difficulty that has arisen is this: Some of the Boards object, I understand, to the moneys for maintenance being tied down to maintenance alone. They object to being limited in

their powers of spending their money, for they cannot spend out of the vote for maintenance, or rebuilding, or rebuilding of teachers' residences any money for small alterations. They have, under the Committee's report, to make application to the Government for moneys out of a special vote for building new schools and for making additions and alterations?—That is, for extensions.

25. Extensions or alterations—altering a class-room, for instance. The Board's have to make application to the Government for that, and they object to it: We want to know what your experience is with respect to that matter, and whether you have any suggestion to make to improve this condition of affairs. You understand the position?—I fancy I do; but it only shows that there must be some misapprehension in this way. For upkeep in the direction you have stated the Education Boards of the colony spent only £27,324, while the suggestions of the Committee in their report—on page 3—go to show that £38,621 would be required. In other words, the Boards spent 4s. 10d. a head, and the report suggests 6s. 9½d. a head as necessary.

26. The report does not deal with the matter from the point of view of so-much per head: it is so-much per cent. upon the cost of the buildings at the time we made the report?—I have worked out the rate at per head myself.

27. What we want to get at is, have you any comment to make upon the Committee's report of last year as to the maintenance vote, in reference to the alterations, small alterations, and so on, with regard to application having to be made to the Government for money to make alterations and build new schools? Do you object to this method of dealing with maintenance?—Yes; I think that is a wrong method. May I merely state these things as a summary of that report? The Committee suggested that the upkeep required would be £38,621.

28. What do you mean by "upkeep"? That is, maintenance.

29. Where do you get that from?—I get it by adding together the items for maintenance—school buildings and residences—in paragraph 7 of the Committee's report.

30. *Mr. Foulds.*] You leave out the rebuilding?—I have classified the items—(a) into maintenance, and (b) rebuilding school buildings. New buildings I have separated from maintenance, or upkeep. The Committee suggest a certain amount of money—£38,621—should be provided for upkeep, and £19,038 for new buildings in consequence of rebuilding. That is what the Committee propose.

31. *Mr. J. Allen.*] What comment have you to make upon that?—According to these tabulations, in preparing which I summarised, worked out, and classified the expenditure on maintenance and buildings according to the annual reports of the various Education Boards, I find that the various Education Boards actually spent on upkeep £27,324, or only 4s. 10d. per head, while on new buildings they actually spent £45,935, or 8s. 1½d. a head.

32. What do you mean by "new buildings"? Does that not mean new buildings in place of old ones, as well as the creation of new buildings altogether?—I assume they are new buildings. I suppose they are in new districts, or extension in present ones. I am taking such facts as I have from your report.

33. Have you distinctly kept the replacing of old buildings apart from new buildings in new districts?—If the Committee will be good enough to look at any one of the balance-sheets they will see that the same statement occurs in each of them—"maintenance of school buildings," "new schools," "additions," "sites." Those are the terms, and I worked out the figures under those headings.

*Sir Edward Gibbes:* That all relates to a period prior to the Committee's recommendation.

34. *Mr. J. Allen.*] What Mr. Hill is quoting from does not deal with the Committee's report at all. We had better get Mr. Hill back to the actual question that we want to get at. The Committee's report of last year recommended that a percentage upon the cost of construction should be set aside for the maintenance of school buildings and teachers' residences, and should be used only for maintenance—for upkeep. You object to that, you say. Upon what ground?—I say that as far as my experience goes—

35. First of all, do you object to the principle?—I say the principle is a wrong one.

36. Why?—For this reason: The timbers used in the erection of schools have not the same life in the various districts. You cannot form a basis of calculation as to how long a school will last if you take one in Auckland and another down in Otago. It is impossible in that way to form an estimate as to how long a school will last. The timber is not the same. Then, there are varieties of timber and physical conditions. In fact, to my mind, those two points are fatal to taking that as a basis. I say the true basis is this: You have had an experience of twenty-five years; you know exactly according to your own return here that the buildings are worth £933,705. You say that if you take a common estimate—I do not say that it is a correct one, but for ordinary working purposes it will do—you can take the life of a school as being thirty years. During the first six years, after the school has been painted and put into proper working-order, there is no expenditure required; so that the school really, in the matter of maintenance—that is, in its upkeep—has to be considered as lasting twenty-four years before it will require renewing, and until it requires renewing it will amount to a definite sum per head to maintain for upkeep year by year estimated on the cost of construction per head for the colony.

37. I do not want to talk of renewal just now: I am talking of maintenance, pure and simple—painting and repairs, and so on?—I am working up to that point. I say that you have this question of renewal, and we will say it costs £8 5s. a head on the basis of twenty-four years. That is the expenditure according to your return, because £8 5s. a head represents the money that has been spent in your district. If you take that as the basis and divide your £8 5s. for the colony by twenty-four, that will give you your actual wear-and-tear on the building, and that is the amount of capitation that, in my judgment, the Committee should grant to the various Education Boards in the colony, and not say to one district, "Your buildings are a little bit older than those of another district, and we will give you a little more than it." I say that is not business. I say, deal with them on the amount that it will take to renew.

38. Do you think that this principle of maintenance—3½ per cent. upon the value of the whole buildings—can be replaced by some other principle?—A much better one, the factor average of wear-and-tear being known.

39. Which shall be based upon difference in locality?—Yes. Take what I said a few minutes ago with regard to the Government fixing a type of school, and that no building in a district should be carried out until that type had been approved by the Minister of Education or this Committee—I do not mind so long as it is a central authority, with all the facts before it—so that the buildings could be put up in a proper manner. I say that that can be done.

40. Supposing that you adopted another principle for providing the money for maintenance and giving the maintenance-money provided by the Crown—whatever the principle of allotting it may be; would it be used for maintenance only?—I would earmark it.

41. As to the question of rebuilding: Supposing the Government set up a fund to replace the buildings when they got old, should that be earmarked also?—Every penny-piece.

*Sir W. R. Russell:* I do not think Mr. Hill quite understands what you are getting at.

42. *Mr. J. Allen.*] If the Committee allot a certain amount per annum to replace buildings as they get too old for use, should that money be earmarked for replacing alone?—Yes.

43. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] Does Mr. Hill understand that that replacing takes place thirty years hence?—Not necessarily.

44. Well, a long period hence?—It is taking place every year, on the average. I am assuming there is a grant every year for replacing, as renewals are required somewhere every year.

45. *Mr. J. Allen.*] That is so—that is the principle here?—I say the facts shown here in the returns from the various Education Boards show that your principle is altogether wrong.

46. That is not the point. I am getting at the principle of allotting the money for those purposes and tying it up for those purposes. That was the Committee's report—that the money should be tied up for maintenance and rebuilding?—I approve of that.

47. The Committee also suggested that a sum should be voted by Parliament and allocated by the Government for extensions and new buildings. Do you approve of that principle?—Certainly. That is the principle that should be adopted.

48. Difficulty has arisen in this respect: We recommended the allotment of money for maintenance, for rebuilding of old schools, and for extensions and new buildings, but we apparently did not provide for small alterations, such as the enlarging of one class-room at the expense of another, the erection of a porch, or a w.c., and so on. We apparently made no exact provision for that sort of thing. What would you suggest as a principle for dealing with that?—I say that comes under maintenance. I say it ought to be part of the maintenance vote.

49. Supposing you admit that principle, is there not this danger, that if you allow the money for such purposes to come out of the maintenance vote, the Education Boards may utilise money which ought to be devoted to upkeep in making alterations, and make upkeep suffer?—No, I do not think so, if the circular defined what upkeep was.

50. Would you limit the alterations that the Boards might make out of their upkeep-money to a certain sum?—Absolutely. I would define exactly what "upkeep" meant, and when the maintenance grant was given it should only be expended upon upkeep and nothing else.

51. We are talking of another thing than pure upkeep—the alteration of a class-room, or the erection of a new porch, or the rebuilding of one. Should that come out of the maintenance vote in your opinion?—I think so.

52. Where do you draw the dividing-line between these small alterations and your additions?—There is no difficulty at all. If the school, which has been erected and approved by the central Department, has not sufficient accommodation, there is an extension. I want to fix the type of certain schools. There should be grades 1, 2, 3, and 4. You would at once know that that school should accommodate so many, and that it would cost on the general average a certain capitation. You say that that school shall be built to represent a type of school to accommodate, say, fifty on the average attendance; you know exactly what the vote will be.

53. The North Canterbury difficulty apparently is this: One class-room got too small, and there was room available in another class-room; and they wanted to make an alteration, I suppose, by means of a dividing-wall. Should that come out of maintenance?—I should think so. It would with us.

54. The only danger I see in it is this, that if the principle is right that the maintenance-money should be for pure maintenance, and you allow these alterations to be made, how are you going to limit the alterations so that the pure maintenance vote will not suffer—that is, the painting and actual repairs?—They have a certain amount of money available, and that has to be so allotted—just the same as the 11s. 3d. capitation has to be allotted—so that it shall carry out the work. It is simply giving the Boards that kind of power which it is necessary they should have. If a man has a small income and he spends too much on one side, he knows what is going to happen on the other.

55. What do you mean by your word "extension"?—Would you consider the erection of a porch an extension?—Certainly not; that is ordinary upkeep.

56. How about the erection of a w.c. where one did not exist?—I do not call that "extension." That is maintenance. It should be "extension" when the accommodation in the buildings provided by the Department is insufficient to satisfy the requirements of the school.

57. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] How would you propose to put the Boards in a more independent position than they are in now with regard to finance, so as to obviate their going back continually for money for additions?—They would not need to if there were proper organization—if arrangements were made so that applications should be considered, say, by a Council such as this every half-year. On the facts which are presented in the returns sent to the Department you could always test the question of extension. The Inspector for the district should, after a Board received an application for a new school, be required to go there and give an independent opinion

as to the needs of a school in the district, or as to whether it would be better for that district to be served by a school near at hand. If the facts so presented warranted the erection of a school, then that school should be of a type, either grade 1, 2, or 3, according to the various needs of the district, and whether it was a district that was not likely to increase, or whether it was a district that would increase slowly—and we have all this information at hand in the various Education Offices—or whether it was a district that would be likely to necessitate an early extension of the school building. In these places I would build schools to accommodate, say, thirty pupils, fifty pupils, and not more than sixty. I would never put up a room to accommodate more than sixty.

58. Who should do it, the Board or the central Government?—The Board should do it. Having received the report from the Inspector, it should make its recommendation and submit its plans to the Department, stating whether it would have a grade-1 building or a grade-2, or a grade-3. The matter should be considered on the facts presented by a departmental authority.

59. How would you avoid the position that the Hawke's Bay Board are in now, the Board recommending an addition to a school and the Department refusing it?—They ought not to refuse it; they are not carrying out their duties.

60. Never mind whether they are doing their duties. We want to avoid these difficulties?—I do not think that if there were a Council, and the facts of this case, as I happen to know them, were presented, they would ever refuse it. The fact of the refusal shows there is something wrong.

61. Is there any automatic principle by which these things could be self-adjusting in the hands of the Board?—You cannot demand money from the Department. If they say they will not give you the money there is an end to the matter. They tie your hands.

62. Can you not suggest any scheme by which there would be an automatic payment in proportion to the average attendance?—That is what I am suggesting; but the application must go to the Department first, and if it is shown there by the facts so presented that accommodation is needed, then that accommodation should be granted. That should be a part of the law. It should not depend on the whim of a Department, but it should be laid down that the Board is entitled on the average attendance to further accommodation. It should be an ordinary demand.

63. Let us suppose that the average attendance in a district was, say, 100 last year, and that when the returns come to be made up this year the average has increased by, say, fifty. Could there not be an automatic principle by which payment could be made for the increase?—No, and it would not be a just principle if you tried it. We will take a concrete illustration. Napier School formerly had to provide accommodation for, we will say, 800 children. Owing to conditions over which the Board certainly has had no control, the school has gone down 100; but the attendance has increased elsewhere. It would not follow that an increase in attendance warrants an increase in accommodation, as the increase may be in Napier where there may be plenty of accommodation.

64. There would be plenty of accommodation in the education district, though not at the school?—Possibly. It is possible for there to be ample accommodation notwithstanding this increase.

65. Is a diminution in any school district not abnormal? You spoke of a decrease in one particular school: is that abnormal?—Yes.

66. Would the chance diminution in one particular school affect the principle?—No, but it is the putting of a case such as you presented. Because a district increases, say, 500 in attendance, it does not necessarily follow that that district requires more accommodation.

67. It may not that year; but as to the question of almsgiving by the Government, can you not suggest some scheme which would make a Board's finance independent of annual begging from the Government?—It would work as a scale, just the same as the ordinary scale works. Taking the cost of all the buildings there is a certain amount—the average cost over a long period of time. You discover the average cost of providing accommodation. If the Government or the Department took that as the basis of allotment in the erection of new buildings and extensions to existing ones the moment the attendance warranted further accommodation, the application should be sent to the Department, the Minister should approve of the type of building, and the money should be granted. If it is to cost £250 the Board should not spend £350.

68. Do you know any of the facts in connection with the want of space at Mahora?—The school should be enlarged. The average attendance warrants that.

69. If any grant depends upon the whim of the Government, how would you propose to obviate an Education Board being placed in the same position as the Hawke's Bay Education Board is in now?—But all grants depend upon the whim of Government.

70. Can you devise no means by which we can get away from that?—No, because the whim of Government is a varying quantity.

71. Then, you think there could be no automatic principle?—The automatic principle, as I have already stated, is possible by taking your basis of so-much capitation——

82. So-much capitation on what?—You know what a building has cost during a series of years.

73. I am speaking of new buildings?—In making school provision you know what it costs per head. The Education Board spends so-much in making school provision. I have an example here: "1880, Napier School, fence and walls, 500 accommodation, £3,425 12s. 9d." Everything was expended in the matter of furniture, and so on, to make that school ready for work. That came to £6 17s. 5d. per head. You could not do it for that now.

74. Take the cost at £7 per head?—Taking all the school buildings in New Zealand, according to the Committee's return it would be £8 5s.

75. We will say £8 on an average. Then, if there is an increase of fifty children in the Hawke's Bay District, I want to know whether there ought not to be £400 available the next year?—Not necessarily. The district may not be entitled to a penny, or it may be entitled to the maximum of £400.



76. I am supposing that there is an increase of fifty, and that it costs £8 to house a child. The Education Board will, according to my lights, sooner or later have to house those children. I want them to ascertain whether there is not some automatic principle by which the Board shall be rendered independent of going to the Government for that money?—You mean to say that the Board should be credited with a capital amount of £400 in anticipation of a possible increase in the district.

77. But I have shown that there is the increase?—I want to point out that that increase may not require accommodation.

78. But I say it does exist?—Take Napier. If the attendance increased by 100 there, we should not want any increased accommodation.

79. But you would want a fund?—You must wait until you do want it.

80. Then, you must go and beg?—There is no begging if the regulation provides that you shall make your application as soon as the demand has arisen.

81. Do you think a Board ought to be considered the proper authority to judge when an addition is necessary?—Most certainly.

82. Then, ought there not to be some power given to the Boards to decide when it shall be done?—When there is accommodation wanted in a place—that is your natural basis on which to found your application for more accommodation. You cannot provide accommodation where there is already accommodation available. That would be improper.

83. As a matter of general principle, do you think the Government or the Board should have power to decide when additional accommodation is wanted in a district?—There is a standard. The Department recognises 12 square feet per child. If it is shown that there are 12 square feet per child available at a school the Department is right in objecting to an increase.

84. If it is found that there is not the 12 ft., what then?—Then make your application for an addition of a certain class. State what kind of an addition you require, send the application to the Department, and if the facts that you present show that the additional accommodation is required, the Department should at once, without waiting and making all kinds of excuses, send word to the Board that the money is available.

85. Should that not be automatically done, instead of having to depend on begging from a Minister?—I cannot see how it could be automatic beyond what I have stated.

86. *Mr. Hall.*] Will you please turn to Table A of the Committee's report for 1903, page 6. You will see at the top there is a scale of payments for maintenance at 3½ per cent. for wooden buildings. Have you got it?—Yes.

87. Say, in Auckland, a school is built of kauri. We all know that kauri lasts a very long time—very much longer than wood, say, in Hawke's Bay. You can see that if a schoolhouse of kauri costs £300 it would be a dearer house in the first instance than a similar one in Hawke's Bay. I mean to say that it would cost more for its size?—Within a few pounds more or less on either side.

88. Supposing you built a school in the North of heart of kauri at £1 the 100 ft.; such a school to accommodate a given number of children would probably cost 25 per cent. more than a similar school would in Hawke's Bay?—I do not think the difference is so great between the various schools. I am taking the amount for the colony. I have taken your own values, and I have divided the amount over a term of years, and it is as I have stated.

89. But say a school would cost more if built of kauri, the lasting properties of the kauri school would be greater?—Yes; but you are taking a special case. I have said that the average life of a school over the whole colony is thirty years.

90. But you have said there should be differential rates, according to the lasting qualities of the timber?—No.

91. Well, I believe, myself, that a school in the Auckland District that would cost £300 there would cost £250 in Hawke's Bay?—I doubt it.

92. But good kauri is worth considerably more in Auckland. On the scale of 3½ per cent. the Auckland school would get £10 10s. every year for its maintenance?—Pardon me, but I have taken them for the colony. I do not want Auckland to receive any more in the way of capitation for the erection of a school building than any other district in New Zealand. The Government bases its estimates upon an average capitation allowance. It has the Public Works Department as a stand-by to see to the value of buildings. It has had experience in the erection of Native schools, and it has all these things available throughout the colony.

93. We will suppose that an Education Board says, "We will build our schools of the very best material; we will build them of the heart of every timber; everything shall be of the best." The Board may make a school to cost even 33 per cent. more than another Education Board would, and yet the basis on which the maintenance was paid would be 3½ per cent. on the cost?—I do not think there would be the slightest difference if you adopted the plan suggested. The plan that you are suggesting here is simply a plan of differentiating the cost of buildings, both as to quality and size.

94. And you believe in differentiating?—I am talking of averages. In the erection of a building the best thing that the Government can provide for a district in the first place should be provided. You would not give, for example, second-class timber in one district and first-class timber in another. I am stating what is the average cost of making school-provision throughout the colony, not in one district.

95. If you will listen to me for a moment you will see what I mean: Different Education Boards could get differential grants in regard to maintenance. They get 3½ per cent. upon the cost of the building for its maintenance. If one puts up a building at £300 and another a building at £250, with the same accommodation for children, there will be a difference every year in the maintenance grant of £1 15s.—the difference between £8 15s. and £10 10s.?—There would not be a difference if the Government had its type of school and the work was carried out as it ought to be.

96. Would you recommend that the whole of the schools of the colony be under the supervision of the central Department?—The erection of new schools should all be supervised. Everything should be done for the benefit of the Board, and, if you liked, the new schools should be given to the Board. I would prefer that plan. Every new school should be erected and equipped ready for the use of the Board.

97. Take our own district: Have you found in your experience that the judgment brought to bear upon these things by the local men is altogether desirable? I will take Hatuma as an instance. You are aware that an application was made a short time ago for a school at Hatuma?—Yes.

98. The number of scholars that were supposed to attend the school was ten, possibly twelve. The Board made an application for £190 for the erection of a school to accommodate those twelve children?—That is at the rate of £19 a head. I do not think the Government is entitled to build a school for any number of children below twenty. They should give a building capitation allowance to a district as a building subsidy, and encourage a little help on the part of the people.

99. You are aware from your own experience that in certain sparsely populated districts in Hawke's Bay you find people who are willing and have intimated their desire to erect buildings for themselves?—There is nothing to stop them from doing so.

100. They must have the consent of the Education Board?—What for?

101. For the erection of the building?—Indeed, I did not know that. If the people in a place like to erect a building and go to the Board and say, "We will give you this building if you will take it over," I think the Board will show its appreciation.

102. You are aware that the Hatuma people offered, if the Government would provide them with a certain amount of material, to find expert men who would erect the school, and yet in the face of that you sent an application to the Government for £190 with which to erect a school for twelve children?—I have never made an application.

103. Well, that is actually a fact, and I want to ask you whether you do not think there should be a central Architectural Department for dealing with school buildings?—I would like to see it. I am suggesting it. I said in my evidence that, although the education system has been in existence twenty-five years, the Government has never taken the trouble to formulate a scheme for sending out plans of types of schools, furniture, &c. Every district has sprawled about as it liked.

104. Then, I understand you to say you would be in favour of a differential rate according to the quality of the school that is built?—I would have the Department carry out the erection of the buildings, and then the differential rate would not exist—it would be an average.

105. *Mr. Sidey.*] When was it, Mr. Hill, that your Board first received this circular from the Education Department containing the information about the grant for maintenance?—Well, I can only say that I saw it on Saturday for the first time. I went to the office at Napier and I was shown the circular.

106. So that before Saturday last you were not aware that such a regulation had been brought into force?—No, I was not aware of that being in existence.

107. No difficulty has arisen in your district as the outcome of that circular, to your knowledge?—They have followed the old plan of doing as they liked. We have a definite scale.

108. I understand that you understand from the circular that no money is to be applied out of that maintenance grant for such a purpose as an addition to a class-room or the erection of a little outbuilding?—I should not so interpret it.

109. Your board have not interpreted it so?—I do not know what the Board have done. I do not know whether our Board have followed or interpreted the circular exactly as the circular stands. I have only tabulated the amounts that have been spent, and certainly according to these our Board has spent a great deal more than anything contained in the circular, both on maintenance and building.

110. So that you are satisfied of this, that there has been money expended by your Board out of the maintenance grant for purposes which would not come within the definition of maintenance under the circular?—I am only dealing with totals. I do not know the details.

111. You assume from the totals that the Board has done so?—In most of the districts I think they spent more than the grant. Auckland, I think, was the exception. The Board there got 10s. 4½d. a head as a vote and spent 10s. 1¼d. a head, while Wellington got 8s. 3d. a head and spent £1 0s. 4½d.

112. Spent that on maintenance?—Well, you see, the term is used indefinitely here.

113. Where did the money come from?—That is another question. I do not know where the money comes from.

114. It is more than they have been granted?—That is so with nearly all of the Boards.

115. To your knowledge, at any rate, no difficulty has arisen with your Board as the outcome of that circular?—I have nothing to do with that.

116. To your own knowledge, I mean?—I do not know anything about it. Our Board is always wanting money, I know, for buildings; and I say this much, although the Assistant-Secretary for Education is here, that in my estimation it is a disgrace that no vote has ever been given for the Dannevirke Public School—following my own memorandum upon the subject—when the facts are so patent.

117. Would you not be likely to have heard it if there had been any difficulty in the Board's getting money for other than maintenance purposes as the result of that circular?—The Dannevirke School has been overfull for a long time, and any gentleman who wants to see the condition there can walk into the school and see a state of affairs that, to my mind, is a disgrace to the Education Department.

118. To your knowledge, there has been no difficulty—I mean under similar circumstances to those of the North Canterbury Board, which Board has been placed at a disadvantage in

having to apply to the Government before it could do a little bit of work like the building of an outhouse? Do you know that there has been any difficulty of the kind?—I do not know that. I am sorry to hear it in the case of Canterbury, because I might say that Canterbury is the most generous of all the Education Boards in the matter of giving help to school districts.

119. With regard to the question put to you by Sir William Russell, do I understand that your proposal relates only to extensions and not to new buildings?—Extensions and new buildings, because an extension to my mind occupies exactly the same position as a new building. “Extension” implies that an increase of school-space is required, and wherever there is an increase of school-space required there should be no question as to a grant for that place.

120. I understand, with regard to additional accommodation required—?—That is, school-extension in consequence of an increase in average attendance.

121. School-extension in consequence of an increase in average attendance—that there should be some system under which, if there was an increase in average attendance, there should be automatically an additional grant?—Exactly. Even that is shown by the quarterly returns of attendance. If the same conditions exist with regard to attendance as exist in connection with staffing, then that should be evidence on behalf of the Board that extension is necessary.

122. How can you apply that in the case of a new building in a new district, because there is no average attendance there at all?—Let the Inspector go to the place and make all inquiries himself. Then he can make his recommendation to his Board, and show which type of school in his opinion ought to be placed there—whether it should be a grade-1, a grade-2, or a grade-3 school. What I mean by grading here is this: In some districts there will never be need for a school to accommodate more than thirty, and an Inspector should exercise his judgment, from the experience which he has had, as to the possibilities of an increase in the district.

123. Do you mean that the moment the report of an Inspector is received as to the requirements of a new district where there is no school, the grant should be immediately made upon that report?—The grants should only be made every half-year. These things should be dealt with then, because population does not increase at such a rapid rate as that. Of course, the evidence in new districts would be different from the evidence with regard to an extension.

124. I understand that; but do you advise there should be no further inquiry by any officers of the Government?—The Inspector is an officer of the Government.

125. He is an officer of the Board?—I take it that he is also an officer of the Government, doing his duty for the good of the country. He is perfectly independent. He receives his instructions to go and visit a school and he reports as he thinks proper.

126. Your recommendation is that his report should be acted upon by the Government?—Not necessarily. It should be sent to the Board.

127. And if the Board approves it should be acted upon without any further inquiry by the Government?—Here in this room you have a body of gentlemen capable of inquiring.

128. But this Committee does not sit all the year round?—I hope you will.

129. Are you aware that such a thing as this has happened, that application has been made by a Board for a grant for two schools in a district where only one was required?—That ought not to occur. There must be something occurring which ought not to occur.

130. *Mr. Fowlds.*] Of course, if we had perfect Inspectors and perfect Boards we could leave the whole thing to be done in the way suggested by Mr. Hill; but what we are trying to do is to arrive at some principle whereby these grants for new schools, extensions, and everything else shall be made automatically, in the direction indicated by Sir William Russell; but I understand you do not think it could be worked, except under the report of the Inspector as to the local conditions?—I see no plan of giving a grant to a district unless upon the facts which are presented in that district. I would set my face definitely against building a school in a district when the attendance would be below twenty, but I would give a building capitation allowance. The Hawke's Bay Education Board did that for many years, and it fostered self-reliance in a marvellous way. I am satisfied this is the best plan to adopt, because of the necessarily heavy expense when a public body goes in for building. The district adopts the plan for the time being and says, “You give us a certain capitation and we will take care to build a school approved by yourselves, but we will watch over the interests of the district ourselves.”

131. Do you think that the Education Board is the best body to deal with special circumstances like that, or the Education Department?—I am entirely in favour of local government, and I think a Board has the opportunity of knowing more about the district with which it is specially concerned than the Education Department.

132. You do not think it would be possible to work on an average taken over a number of years by simply making an allocation to each district for new buildings or extensions, on the basis of the increase in average attendance in that particular district?—If you could tell when children were going to be born, then you could do that. You do not know where they are going to be located, and unless you can form a basis such as that you cannot anticipate a school in one district and not in another. If the district requires a school by average attendance, provide it. That is my view.

133. You mean a small school district—not an educational district?—Just so.

134. I take it you consider that the chances of extension in the number of pupils are such that it would not work out on a fair basis to allocate the grants on the increase in average attendance?—It would be absolutely impossible.

135. With reference to repairs, you reckon that the Maintenance Account ought to bear the cost of such small alterations as have been suggested by Mr. Allen—the erection of a new porch or new closets, or alterations to class-rooms?—The maintenance grant should provide for all such things.

136. This is the point: Is it possible that Education Boards might spend unduly in that direction and leave such essential work as painting in abeyance, to the general loss of the State

in reference to school buildings?—I do not think so, if the circulars from the Education Department were to enumerate what work had to be done, and to state that the Boards would be held responsible for carrying out that work.

137. *Mr. Hardy.*] Mr. Sidey was trying to pin you to some circular issued by the Department, and asked you if that circular had been the cause of, I think he said, any irritation. Do you think that a circular issued only a few months ago would be likely to cause much irritation until its effects had been felt?—I do not know anything about the irritation caused by the circular.

138. He spoke about something taking place in North Canterbury, and he asked if any difficulty has arisen in consequence of the receipt of that circular. The question I want to put is this: As the circular has only recently been issued—?—In last February.

139. —and as the Boards have only recently acted on it, is there any likelihood of a difficulty arising so quickly?—I take it that the Boards have not acted upon it.

140. Oh, yes! Some Boards carry out the instructions loyally?—The Auckland Board is the only Board that has done so. I am judging by these figures.

*Mr. Hardy:* You are working on the wrong figures.

141. *Mr. Fowlds.*] The circular is dated February, and your figures refer to the period ending the 31st March?—The amounts total up the same.

142. I understand you condemn the basis of allocating the maintenance-money at 3½ per cent. on the cost of the buildings. You object to that?—I object because I do not think it is a correct basis.

143. What is the basis that you would go upon?—I have stated it. I took the valuation that is stated here in your return, and then I took the average attendance for New Zealand and divided the total value of the buildings by the average attendance at the schools.

144. And you got £8 5s.?—Yes. Then, assuming—I do not say it is a correct assumption, but it is the nearest that I know of, and I am prepared to accept it—assuming that thirty years constitutes the life of a school building, during the first six years after a school is erected there is no maintenance required. That leaves twenty-four years, during which time the £8 5s. has to disappear; and I say that if you divide the £8 5s. by 24 it should give the maintenance per year, or the upkeep—that is, the amount per head of average attendance. I have worked it out with reference to the London School Board, and I find that it comes to very nearly the same per head as it does in New Zealand.

145. You divide the £8 5s. by 24?—That gives the capitation.

146. That would be something under 8s.—never mind the exact amount. You would pay 8s. per head per year?—Eight shillings capitation. If you multiply the attendance—113,000—odd—by 8s. it will give you your maintenance grant per year.

147. And you would locate it on that basis?—You see you would have the same conditions as you have in the payment of teachers' salaries and grants to School Committees. You would have the same principle involved. Otherwise you have an uncertain factor if you take the basis the Committee recommends. My plan would give the same basis for every school in New Zealand.

148. But how would that apply in the case of buildings of a different class—brick and stone buildings—in different districts?—You could make two averages if you liked. It would not make any difference.

149. *Sir Edward Gibbes.*] The difficulty about the distribution by the Government of a special vote lies principally in the fact that School Committees and Inspectors and Boards are all actuated by the laudable desire to get the best school accommodation for their district, and when it is only a matter of asking the Government for money, naturally demands are made with very great freedom. And, although Mr. Hill is not aware of it, I can say that Inspectors of Schools show just as much desire to get good buildings and large sums of money for their districts as anybody else. Now, how is the Government in distributing a special vote going to get over that difficulty? That is really the difficulty that lies at the bottom of all the applications that have been refused. I have here just a few notes of some typical cases that have been refused, and perhaps Mr. Hill knows something about some of them. I will take the case of a school which was built, perhaps fifteen years ago—built on a very bad plan, built probably cheaply, and possibly for residential purposes, but which at all events has now become not worn out, but utterly unsuitable for use. It wants reorganization. The total area of the school building is still such that it is adequate for the attendance, but through deficiency in height of studs and unsuitability in the size of the rooms it has become an unsuitable building for the purpose. Who is going to provide for this? The Board, of course, ask the Government for a special grant. As Mr. Hill said, where there were 12 square feet of floor-space per child the Government was right in refusing a grant. Now, what is going to be done in a case of that kind?—I take that as a matter of renewal, if a district has a lean-to which has been provided simply because the Government would not give a grant as they ought to have done. I say the Government should have provided a building. It is a case where the Department has not done its duty.

150. But there are 12 square feet provided already?—That is, 12 square feet per child provided by adding a shed would, according to your own showing, be school accommodation.

151. No. That is a class of application that is made to the Government—that the school building has now become unsuitable on account of defective structure. Who ought to provide accommodation then?—If a building wants renewing, accommodation should be provided under the principle that is already recognised by the Committee. If there is a shed it is just the same; accommodation should be provided of a proper type. Evidently there has been some difficulty on account of the Department not giving grants at the proper time, and the Board has done the work out of maintenance.

152. Up to the end of last year there was no restriction as to applying money solely to maintenance. The Boards were at liberty to spend their money how they chose?—That is the point I am grumbling at the Department over. I say there should have been a real form of government.

It should have been understood. Everything has been drifting, and naturally under such conditions, with Committees and Boards and everybody else it has been simply a game of grab.

153. Of course, there are a great many cases, and I have no doubt a good deal of irritation has been caused in many districts by repeated refusals. Now, take the case of Tolago Bay. You know that case?—Very well.

154. There was a long discussion with your Board on the subject?—Yes.

155. The Government many years ago gave a grant for putting into order the Native school at Tolago Bay and then handing it over to the Board in a complete condition, upon the understanding that the Native children were in future to be provided for by the Board at the same school as the European children. They were all to attend it. Applications have since been made for additions to that school, and it appears that the money that was given to the Board for enlarging that school in order to make it a Native and public school was not definitely used for that purpose, but that what had been an old shelter-shed was put up alongside the school and was called a class-room; and it was on account of that becoming utterly unsuitable that the grant for an addition was applied for. Do you remember that case?—I remember it very well.

156. That is just an instance?—If you see my letters on the question, you will see that I grumbled and pronounced all kinds of anathemas against the Department for allowing such a state of affairs to exist, because there is the very condition that you mentioned in your first statement.

157. But that is an instance where an application has been made to the Government for a special grant in order to improve accommodation that has been put up by the Board?—It was a Native school originally.

158. Is the Department bound to provide now for all the deficiencies in the buildings that have been put up by the Boards in the past?—That is a most extraordinary question, pardon me for saying it. If accommodation is wanted, I do not care if it is for Natives or Europeans, it should be provided. It is not a question of how the school came under the Board. The Board did what they thought best at the time, and there was no accommodation there. They had to use a shed, or spend money in utilising a shed for a school, which was a disgrace to any Department. Eventually, after my grumbling for years and drawing attention, year after year when I went to the district, to the state of affairs, the Board did erect an addition, and I commend the Board for it. I think they acted most properly.

159. Then, where schools which were put up by the Boards were originally of defective design, and the increase in the attendance is now showing the defective structure—?—There is no defective design in this school. The design is suitable for ordinary work, and the building is worked in at the present time. All the school-work is carried on there. The only alteration that has been made is that the wretched shed that was there has been taken away; and quite right, too.

160. You said that the condition of the Dannevirke School was a disgrace to the Government?—I did.

161. Do you remember that three years ago the Board was authorised to expend some £300 or £400 on that school?—No. If that amount was authorised it was to make provision for secondary work—to make provision for the use of the school as a district high school, and not to make extension for the requirements of the school-children.

162. But it was in order to enlarge the primary school?—We made the addition and spent about £500, but the Government will not give us a penny of it. I am stating what our secretary says—that the Board cannot get anything from the Department on this work.

163. Take the case of the Woodville School. You applied in June for £240?—Yes.

164. And you were told that the total floor-space was already more than adequate for the number of children attending the school?—I have not seen the memorandum from the Department, and I know nothing about it. I know there was an application made for a grant in order to extend the building with a view to providing accommodation for the secondary class, but I have not heard from the Board as to whether there was any reply.

165. *Sir W. R. Russell.*] I would point out that going on the basis of the average attendance very often makes a school horribly overcrowded. If you only provide floor-space for the number of children who attend on the average, when you get the maximum attendance the school is overcrowded?—There is another question I would like to draw attention to, and that is with regard to the peculiar position taken up by the Department in granting only 12 square feet per child for a secondary class. To me it is a marvellous thing. The present arrangement in our schools is like putting a mustard plaster upon a human being in a wrong place. There is no system in connection with these secondary classes. No provision is made, and we want accommodation for those children. If you are going to have a district high school you want extra provision. Take the amount per head provided for a secondary school, and compare it with the amount for the primary schools.

*Mr. J. Allen:* I do not think we need go any further into that.

166. *Sir Edward Gibbes.*] The question is, how is the Government to ascertain accurately what is the position?—I have stated how the thing should be done.

167. You said the Inspectors should report?—You have the method of dividing the money.

168. I am speaking of the distribution of the special grant?—I have simply made a suggestion that it should be a capitation basis. I see no difficulty if you will follow out the plan of finding out what is wanted before you make your vote.

169. But how is the Department to find out the accuracy of what is represented to us? I will give you an instance that occurred yesterday. An application was made for the extension of a school, and it was stated there were eighty-two children within three miles of the school who were not now attending it. Well, of course, that was taken to mean that those children wanted accommodation—that they could not get into the school because there was no room for them.

The Department, of course, had to proceed to make investigations—and I may say that investigation of these things, on account of the absence of the Department's own officers, is a very difficult matter indeed. However, investigation was made, and it turned out that of those eighty-two children twenty-five—we will say twenty-five, because I do not remember the numbers—were attending other public schools, ten were attending private schools, eight were over age and had left school, and so on, and the number of children of school age who might attend was brought down to five. That is an actual fact?—That could never have occurred if the Inspector had reported, surely.

170. In this case the application comes from a district in which there is only one form of application—only one formula. The Inspector says, "This addition is urgently needed"?—Well, I have refused to even recommend when an application has been presented to me. I have refused to certify that the accommodation is required.

171. Every one of the applications sent in by that district which have been refused bears that indorsement by the Inspector?—I should like to say this, because it raises a very vital question, in my estimation, for the consideration of the Committee: In a memorandum which Sir Edward sent to our Board he drew attention to the fact that there was accommodation in another school district, and stated that the children in one district should go to another. I say there is nothing in the Act to compel those children to be sent from one school in one district to another in an adjacent district. The answer in another memorandum from the Department—and this is the case of a district which, to my own knowledge, has done an enormous amount of work and made its own school-provision—in reply to an application for payment of a few pounds was that, there being a Native school in the district, the Government could not give a grant, and the children therefore must go to the Native school. I say the Native school has nothing to do with it. We cannot enforce our attendance at a Native school; we have no government over a Native school. This is the result: in order to satisfy the Government and the Minister our children at Tokomaru have to go to a Native school and take up a lower standard. I say the Board has no authority over that school. That was the answer we got, and that is the way in which education with us is retarded.

172. That affords me an opportunity of giving another instance. There is a school at Tokomaru Bay, an excellent Native school, with any amount of accommodation, and a good teacher. There are some sixty Maoris attending. In that district there are seventeen European children, and the Board has made an application for another school, which would cost the usual £200 or £300, I suppose, though I do not remember the amount just now. They have applied for a special school a couple of hundred yards from the Maori school for these seventeen European children?—They will be very glad if you will give them a capitation of £5. That I will guarantee. I would like to make it clear, gentlemen, that in what I have stated I am not blaming Sir Edward or the Department. It is the system.

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WEDNESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 1904.

H. C. LANE, Secretary to North Canterbury Education Board, examined. (No. 2.)

*The Chairman:* Will you examine Mr. Lane, Mr. Buddo, as you are aware of the evidence it is desired should be placed before the Committee?

1. *Mr. Buddo.*] Do you propose making a statement to the Committee, Mr. Lane, as to how far the recommendation of the Committee of last year affected your Board, and the trouble that has arisen with regard to alterations and additions to schools?—I have come with all the papers, which I think will give me the information you may ask for. I have prepared a short letter on behalf of the Board, as probably supplementing any evidence I may give. I have that letter here, but it deals with a matter that perhaps will not be raised, so I thought I would leave it until the end.

2. *The Chairman.*] We are anxious that you should have every opportunity of putting your views and those of your Board before the Committee. The only question is as to the most convenient way of doing that. If you would like to make a statement first you are quite at liberty to do so?—Perhaps if I were to read this letter first it might bring out one or two points on which members may wish for information. It reads: "As supplementing and, perhaps, confirming any evidence it may be within my power to give before your Committee on Wednesday next, on the subject of the distribution of the buildings and maintenance votes, I desire to furnish the following statement on behalf of the Board: As regards—(1) the Department's circular of the 17th February last, restricting the Board's expenditure of the ordinary grant; (2) the provision made for some of the several purposes for which the grant is available; (3) the Board's expenditure during 1904. (1.) The Board can discover nothing in the report of the Education Committee authorising the omission of any provision for the erection of additions to existing buildings, whether schools or teachers' residences. Hitherto the Board has been able to use the ordinary grant for such additions. But the terms of the Department's circular of the 17th February inferentially forbid this, a restriction considered to be unnecessary and calculated to seriously embarrass the Board in its endeavours to meet the reasonable requirements of its district. In support of this contention the Board would point out that being on the spot, with an actual knowledge of the merits of any case brought before it, the Board is in a much better position to consider applications than the Department can be. In addition to the experience of the members of the Board, some one or more of whom are acquainted with all the schools, the Board has also available the expert knowledge of its Inspectors. On the other hand, it appears to the Board that, without a personal acquaintance with the facts, any decision the Department may come to must necessarily be largely based on theoretical grounds. For instance, theoretically the number of square feet of floor-space con-

tained in a school may appear sufficient, while in actual practice it may be found that the whole area cannot be fully utilised, owing to the disposition of the several classes causing a wastage. Further, the Board submits that the new departure will inevitably have an unfortunate effect on School Committees and teachers. When it becomes generally known that the final decision does not rest with the local authority, those immediately concerned will naturally demand that their wishes shall be made known to the Department, in the hope that the Board's judgment in setting aside their applications may be reversed. This will lead to much inconvenience, as there are many cases to be dealt with each year, some of which are of a nature requiring that prompt attention which a reference to the Department and the observance of formalities practically prohibit. [NOTE.—In two recent cases the petitioners have notified their intention to appeal to the Department.] (2.) While the Board desires freedom of action when dealing with applications for additions, it does not follow that a larger grant than that recommended in the aggregate (£8,600) by the Education Committee is required. There is reason to believe that with a slight readjustment of the amounts available under the several headings this vote (with special grants for new schools) would prove sufficient. The cost of maintenance might be reduced from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to 3 per cent., making a saving of £824 per annum (£624 on schools and £200 on residences). Then, the average life of a well-built school—and a majority of the buildings in North Canterbury may be so described—is probably rather more than thirty-five years. If a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. instead of a 10 per cent. allowance were made for rebuilding and renewals of wood buildings of thirty and under thirty-five years old, an additional saving of approximately £113 would be effected, setting free altogether about £937 per annum for general purposes, including additions. If expenditure must be strictly in accordance with the allocation of votes for specific purposes, it will be necessary for contractors to tender separately for repairs to schools and residences. The Board would suggest that the votes in regard to schools and residences should be taken as one, to be used for either the one or the other as may be thought fit. In the case of reinstatement of school buildings destroyed by fire it is not quite clear what contribution the Department would make. Supposing a school over thirty-six years old should be destroyed this year, the Board having received 5 per cent. by way of sinking fund, what would the Department grant to assist in reinstatement? (3.) During the present year the Board has expended something like £1,420 to which exception may be taken by the Audit Office as not being in strict accordance with the terms under which the votes were passed. Of the larger of these works, Oxford East (rebuilding house) and Spreydon (addition to school) were contracted for previous to the 31st December, 1903; while of the expenditure on the Lower Kaituna School, £150 was granted some years ago by the Department for a school there. The expenditure on new school, Kaituna (Upper), on the addition to school at Darfield, and on removing school from Hinds to Carew appeared to the Board to be necessary and justifiable. The Board would ask the Education Committee to recommend that expenditure of this kind should be passed." That is the short letter I have prepared as supplementing any evidence I might give this morning.

3. *Mr. Buddo.*] Have your Board tried to carry out the provisions of the regulation that was circulated in February last?—Yes, to a large extent.

4. Have they in any case felt that there was a hardship inflicted on certain pupils in certain schools in their district, by the delay necessitated by applying to the Department for the necessary grant, and the refusal that followed?—Yes. The Board are distinctly of opinion that if the procedure outlined in the recommendation of last year is adhered to, it will result in a good deal of inconvenience. They have a large number of applications for new schools, or additions to schools, or additions to teachers' houses each year. Some of these are of a fairly urgent nature, and it follows of necessity that application to the Department, with all the formalities that have to be gone through, will lead to delay, for while these things are being done time will be going on, and probably some three or four months will be taken up. I have here a list of applications for new schools or for additions during the last year. There appear to be about twenty-four cases.

5. Could you summarise the general requirements of the Committees? Are those applications for additions or are they for alterations to existing buildings?—I have them here in detail. I could read them out.

6. It would be well, in order to show the Board's work for the year, that you should do so?—"List of applications for new school buildings or additions, 1904: Ashley Gorge—Addition to school; not yet dealt with. Mayfield—Addition to school; declined by Board. Waltham—Addition to school; declined by Department. Carew—New school; granted by removal of Hinds side. Ladbrooks—Addition to school; declined by Department. Addington—Addition to school; declined by Department. Bromley—Addition to house; declined by Board. Kincaid Downs—New school; declined by Department. Templeton—Addition to school; forwarded to Department. Lowcliffe—Addition to house; refused by Board (small). Rakaia North—New school; agreed to forward to Department conditionally. Waikuku—Addition to school; declined by Board. Eyretton—Addition to school; under consideration. Kaituna Upper—New school; granted by Board. Kaituna Lower—New school; granted by Board. Kaituna Lower—New house; granted by Board. Fairton—New house; declined by Board. Le Bon's Bay Upper—New school; declined by Board. Port Hills—New school; under consideration. Lyndon No. 1—New school; declined by Board. Leeston—Addition to house; declined by Board. Linwood—New school; declined by Board. Belfast—Addition to house; declined by Board. Omihi—Addition to school; under consideration." In two of these cases—Linwood and Rakaia North—the petitioners have intimated their intention of appealing to the Government, saying they are not satisfied with the Board's decision. Probably that will happen in most cases.

7. Taking the number of applications that your Board receives, do you think the Department can as effectually deal with applications as the Boards of the colony?—No, I think not, as mentioned in my letter. I think that the members of a Board and the Inspectors possess between them both the theoretical and the practical knowledge necessary to come to a proper judgment.



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



have been well built and well looked after, and the Board is inclined to think that the life of its wooden buildings could be extended by five years beyond the term set down here. That would only make a very slight saving—about £113. The parliamentary report makes no discrimination between schools over thirty years of age at all. It was thought that a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. basis would be sufficient for schools of from thirty to thirty-five years, and then 10 per cent. for schools over thirty-five years of age. If a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. instead of a 10 per cent. allowance were made for rebuilding and renewals of wood buildings of thirty and under thirty-five years old a slight saving would be made, which the Board could profitably use for general purposes, including additions.

21. Do you consider that the setting-aside of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. as a maintenance fund is a sound basis and is calculated to preserve our buildings for a longer time than hitherto?—As I state in this letter, as far as North Canterbury is concerned—and this is corroborated by the information first sent up to your Committee about a year ago—as far as the North Canterbury Board is concerned a 3 per cent. allowance would be sufficient. The original estimate of the clerk of works, after going over the expenditure for five years, is shown in the following telegram sent by the Board: “Difficult to arrive at cost of maintaining buildings owing to outlay on fencing, draining, and levelling, &c.; but architect estimates cost covering last five years as follows: Wood, a little over 2 per cent. per annum on cost of construction; brick,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. This latter exclusive of repairing extensive damage by earthquakes. Experience as regards stone limited, but cost probably much the same as brick.” With regard to that 2 per cent., the Department asked afterwards “You state cost of maintenance of wooden buildings little over 2 per cent. per annum of cost of construction, brick  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. Do you include cost of maintenance for fencing, furniture, and outbuildings?” The Board replied, “Cost of fencing, furniture, outbuildings, and improving grounds not included. An addition of approximately 1 per cent. should be added to previous estimate to cover such items.”

22. Then, you maintain that if you erect a good building you require an extra percentage for maintenance?—No; a well-built and a well-looked-after building naturally will not cost so much to maintain in the long-run as a badly built building.

23. You maintain that the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. should not apply to the whole of the school buildings of the colony?—As far as the North Canterbury schools are concerned, the Board thinks that perhaps a 3 per cent. basis would be sufficient, seeing that our schools are in good order.

24. You say that you could find funds for additions out of your general fund?—If the Board had liberty to spend that additional  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. as it thought fit for general purposes, including additions, it would answer all purposes. The Board would not require any larger grant. It only wishes for permission to deal with additions—for instance, a scullery for a teacher’s house, or a 5 ft. or 10 ft. addition to a school, or the lengthening of a room for a teacher. Under the regulations now the Board cannot even do this, and it feels the restriction more in these cases than, perhaps, in the case of new schools. In the case of new schools the Board is quite willing to be guided by its Inspectors, and not to make any applications for schools that the Inspectors do not think are necessary.

25. Have you made any calculation on a capitation basis—that is, have you taken into consideration the number of children present at the North Canterbury schools on an average and the amount of money allowed to you, divided the latter by the number of children, and seen what it came to per head?—Yes, I have made myself conversant with a table of that description, covering the expenditure on maintenance. I think that is what you refer to.

26. Yes?—I have a table here before me now.

27. I would like to know how you would find it tally with your present calculation—that is, do you think it would be a more equitable basis on which to give grants?—An average attendance rather than a percentage?

28. You understand that the circumstances in different districts are different. Yours is an older-settled district. In some districts the schools are wide apart and difficult for the Board to administer, and there are more frequent requests for new schools. Do you think that a grant on a capitation basis would be more equitable all round than under the present system?—I do not altogether think that a grant on a capitation basis works out fairly. Take a new district where the need for schools is continually increasing. I think a grant of a percentage on the cost of construction would meet the case. As far as our Board is concerned they work out practically the same, because when the Board’s architect submitted his estimate of about 3 per cent. as being about what was required, he took it from five years’ expenditure. So that one corresponds with the other.

29. Taking it on the cost of construction, one architect would build a school all of heart of timber—of the very best material he could get—while another architect would probably for a large portion of the building use second-class timber and inferior material. Under the present arrangement the capitation would be upon the cost of construction, whereas the inferior school would depreciate much earlier than the good one?—Yes, that is so.

30. Would you recommend that the system should remain as it is, under the district architects, or be placed under one general architect, who would see that the schools were all built soundly and properly?—I think there would be very great difficulty in having all the schools dealt with under one architect, owing to the large number to be attended to. But, of course, as far as Education Boards and School Committees are concerned, they benefit or suffer from the actions of their predecessors. Where a Committee, for instance, has not used its incidental fund carefully, the time eventually comes when the members get into trouble, not through their own fault, but their predecessors. It may be the same with Education Boards. I suppose those who follow have to put up with that. They inherit the legacy that has been left to them.

31. *Mr. Sidey.*] I understand, Mr. Lane, that you approve of the principle laid down by the Committee in their report—namely, that there should be a certain fixed sum given to the Boards, to be exclusively used for maintenance?—Exclusively used for maintenance?

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.

51. *Mr. Sidey.*] That amounts to this, then: that in your opinion the amount that is put down for maintenance under the Committee's recommendation is rather large?—As far as my Board is concerned, the 3½ per cent. basis would cover also ordinary additions to school buildings. It would not cover an extraordinary addition, such as a very large addition being required to a city school and costing £500 or £600. It would not cover such an addition, but all the ordinary requirements would be met if that £1,000 were released and if the Board had permission to spend it. £8,600 is, I understand, the amount the Board will receive next year. Well, after setting aside the sinking fund for rebuilding I think there would be plenty for the Board to go on. My Board has had hitherto, roughly speaking, a little under £6000.

52. I understand that, in your opinion, the amount allowed under the scale of the Committee is rather large for maintenance, and that you think a small additional sum should be allowed for additions?—It is not too much for maintenance if you will allow these small additions to be made out of it.

53. You think that additions might be included in maintenance, and the sum already allocated would be sufficient?—Yes, provided the Board were free to apply to the Department in any extraordinary case, such, for instance, as those of Waltham and Addington. I spoke just now about the average attendance being a fluctuating basis. I would like to illustrate what I meant. Take North Canterbury: It has a certain number of schools to be maintained, and yet its average attendance has been going down; so that you see in that case the attendance basis would work out unsatisfactorily. The Board would have just the same number of schools to maintain, yet it would not have as much money.

54. Is it your opinion that the present regulations with regard to new buildings should continue, and that you should go to the Department every time you want a new building?—No. The Board thinks it should have more freedom of action, restricted as the Department may regulate—by, for instance, the Inspectors. If the Inspector's report were unfavourable, the Board should not proceed with the work without referring to the Department. I do not think any Board would, if its Inspectors were its experts and if they were decidedly of opinion that the work was not necessary, make application.

55. You mentioned that there is a danger of people in localities appealing from the Boards to the Department while the Department has control?—There is not only a danger, but that is the actual position at the present time. Take the case of Linwood. Although members of the Board have been through the district twice and there is a school within a mile and a half of the locality where the residents want one, they are not satisfied, and on the last occasion they said to the members, "We will appeal to the Government." They know that now the Board has not the final decision, that it rests with the Department, and they are going to appeal to the Department. This undermines the influence of the Board, and it will make the teachers and Committees unsettled. A teacher will apply for, say, an additional room, which the Board does not think is wanted. "Oh," the teacher will say, "what does the Department say?" and he will want the matter referred to the higher authority.

56. How far would you go? Would you have everything settled by the Board and not by the Department—I mean, as regards new buildings?—I think that all the administration might be left to the Boards—properly safeguarded in the way I have mentioned—that where the Inspector's reports were unfavourable the matter should be referred to the Department.

57. But where the Inspectors reported in favour of a new school?—If the Board and the expert are in favour of a new school I think it should go on.

58. No matter what the amount, and without any further investigation by the Government?—Well, I think the Inspectors, being the Board's experts, they have all the knowledge that the Department can have, and the Board, being on the spot, it knows the actual needs of the locality. I do not think any Board and its Inspectors, taking them together, would go in for unnecessary expense.

59. *Mr. J. Allen.*] You are speaking for your own district, I presume?—Entirely.

60. Not from a general point of view?—No.

61. Your Board has kept the schools in North Canterbury in good repair, has it not?—Yes; generally speaking, they are in very good repair. A number of cases have had to stand over owing to the Board's funds having become exhausted.

62. I am talking of maintenance, pure and simple?—Yes.

63. Maintenance has had to stand over?—Yes.

64. Why?—Take last year. In 1903 the Board spent £2,417 on maintenance, simply because it had not any more money. There were some other cases that required attention. In 1901 it spent £4,957, and in 1902 £4,106. In 1901 the Board had to go to the Department for an advance of £2,000. The effect of that was felt later on, and consequently the Board had to restrict its expenditure last year. But it is true that, generally speaking, the condition of the Board's buildings is very good.

65. I presume from what you say that money that ought to have been spent purely upon maintenance has gone for some other object?—No, it has not gone for any other purpose. The expenditure was anticipated. In 1901 nearly £5,000 was spent on maintenance, and in the next year £4,106, leaving the Board very little to spend last year, having regard to the need of keeping within bounds.

66. Generally speaking, though, your schools are in thorough repair?—Generally speaking, they are in good order.

67. Are you aware of what is taking place in other districts with regard to repairs—to maintenance?—I understand that in some of the districts the buildings are in a poor way.

68. Yes. I do not know whether you have read an account of a meeting of the Wellington Board of Education in the *New Zealand Times* of the 30th September last?—No. I saw an article this morning.

69. Are you aware that the Chairman said there that the Board had been with him to see how horribly dingy the building looked—referring to the Mount Cook Boys' School. "The whole roof consisted of huge patches of rusty iron. The appearance of the buildings was a lasting disgrace. Some schools had not been painted for seven, eight, ten, and fifteen years." That is the statement there. If it be true, do you think that is a right condition of things?—It is not for me to say.

70. *The Chairman.*] You can give your opinion?—It is a legacy that, unfortunately, has been left by the Board's predecessors.

71. *Mr. J. Allen.*] I am talking of the general principle of allowing maintenance to get into that condition. Is that a right thing?—No. Speaking entirely for myself, and not for the Board now, I think, it shows that the buildings have not been looked after properly.

72. With what result to those who have paid for the buildings and who will have to repay for them? Will it cost more to the State to replace these buildings and put them into a proper condition?—If these buildings are to be put into a thorough state of repair the expenditure will be heavier.

73. I only want you to state again what you said before with regard to maintenance pure and simple. Defining maintenance as maintenance pure and simple—upkeep, repairs, painting, and so on, but no additions at all—do you think that the money for maintenance—which money is provided by the Government and the taxpayer—should be tied down for maintenance pure and simple as I have defined it? Do you think that what is provided for maintenance should be used for maintenance pure and simple, in view of what I have just read, or should a Board be allowed to use money that is provided purely for maintenance for other purposes and let the schools be neglected? It is the principle I want to know about?—If the Government find that some Education Boards have not maintained their schools efficiently, although they may have had the funds, certainly I think it quite proper for the Government to consider whether the money should not be absolutely tied down.

74. You are aware that we adopted  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the cost of wooden buildings as the maintenance-money?—Yes.

75. I understood you to say that you think that in your district 3 per cent. would be enough for maintenance as I have defined it?—Yes.

76. Setting free  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.?—Yes.

77. Do you think that could be said of other districts?—I should say it could not be said of some other districts.

78. Coming to the question of small alterations: Do you make any distinction between alterations which do not affect the floor-space and additions which do? Supposing that we devise a scheme for allotting to each Education Board a sum of money for small alterations and for additions, do you think that that scheme should be one scheme providing money for the two things, or would you separate them?—I think that alterations should be considered as maintenance unless they included the building of a new room while the men were about it. Some alterations would include that.

79. I want you to draw the line between alterations which you consider should be charged to maintenance and additions which should come out of another vote?—All alterations that did not increase the floor-space might be considered ordinary maintenance. They would simply be effected for the better working of the school.

80. In your opinion those should come out of the maintenance vote?—Yes.

81. If we recommend that, is there any possibility—not of your Board, but of any other Board, for we have to consider the lot—using moneys for these small alterations which ought to be used for maintenance pure and simple?—I cannot say about other Boards.

82. Do you think it would be better for us to recommend the giving of, say,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or whatever we may decide should be allotted, purely for maintenance, and that another proportion should be allotted for these small alterations and the two be kept distinct?—No. I think small alterations should be included in maintenance.

83. Do you think there would be any danger, from the general point of view, of moneys being used for small alterations which ought to go to maintenance, and buildings getting into the state that I have read of?—That refers to other Boards. I could scarcely give an opinion on that.

84. Now, with regard to these larger additions which alter the floor-space, and new buildings—we will take the two together: Can you suggest to us any automatic scheme or arrangement by which the Government should be able to provide fairly and equitably the different Education Boards with moneys for new buildings in new districts, and for these larger alterations which affect the floor-space? Can you suggest any automatic scheme by which the Government can supply that money?—As I said before, I think that cases of new schools required for newly settled districts are distinctly cases where the need having been created by the Government, the Government should give the money for the schools. But with regard to all ordinary additions, and all ordinary new schools that are required in districts where there has been no particular new settlement, but where the district has gradually grown until they want a school, I think all these should be done out of the Board's ordinary funds.

85. I want to know on what principle these ordinary funds should be provided for the Boards by the Government?—I can only speak for my own Board. If the Department find that some restrictions are absolutely necessary, I would not like to say they should not be imposed. I should agree with the Department in imposing them.

86. Taking your own Board alone: Can you suggest any scheme, which shall work automatically, for providing you with the necessary moneys for new buildings and additions?—It is very difficult to do so.

87. Would you suggest a percentage on the present number of buildings, or a capitation basis, or what?—It is very difficult to suggest a basis. You can for maintenance, but it is very difficult to suggest what should be the basis for new schools.

88. Have you anything to suggest with regard to your own district only?—No. It would require a little thinking over. I would not like to say without further consideration.

89. You suggested to Mr. Sidey that the various Education Boards in their applications for new buildings and additions, would all be likely to be influenced by a spirit of care and economy. Do you think that would be so if the money were freely provided?—Did I give that impression?

90. I understood so?—Do you mind putting it again?

91. You suggested that it should be left to the Boards, practically speaking, to make their demands for new schools and additions on the advice of their Inspectors, and that somehow or another the money should be automatically provided?—Yes.

92. If that were done would it not lead to extravagant demands being made?—That would entirely depend on the administration of the several Boards. It has not led to that with our Board; and I could not speak for the other Boards.

93. Would not one Board be anxious to put in as many applications as it could, in order to secure its share or more than its share?—I should think it would be very wrong of a Board to do it.

94. But would not some of them be likely to do it?—There might be exceptions; but, generally speaking, I do not think the Boards would do it. As far as my Board is concerned, the only application it has made under the new order of things has been an application for a new school at Kincaid Downs.

95. Let me ask you whether, in view of the fact that the Government and the taxpayer are supplying the money, it is not right that they should have some control over the expenditure of that money, especially money for new buildings and additions, which, on your own admission, cannot be allotted automatically?—The control would be vested in the Board, which is elected by the people, by the School Committees.

96. But the Board does not tax the people for the money, does it?—No.

97. Is the Government and Parliament to have any control over the allotment of that money, when it cannot be allotted fairly automatically, or are the demands of the Board to be met?—I think the demands of the Board should be met if they are in accord with the Inspector's recommendations; but if the Inspectors do not make a favourable recommendation, then I decidedly think the matter should be referred to the Department. I think that in all cases where the Board and the Inspectors of the Board agree that a school is absolutely necessary, that school should be erected.

98. Do you not think that your proposal, if carried to its legitimate conclusion, would perhaps lead ultimately to Parliament saying, "If the Boards use this power we will also place in the hands of the Boards the power to raise the money themselves, locally?—Of course, you are touching on a very important point now.

99. What is your opinion on that point?—I think that districts might help themselves a little more than they do at present.

100. They might raise part of the funds?—I think they should give some assistance. The Board has what it calls "aided schools," but the name is a misnomer, because they are not aided. The people have become so used to all their requirements being granted that they will not help themselves. We have great difficulty in getting a committee of residents to guarantee the School Committee the balance of a teacher's salary. At one time they did this.

101. Do you think that should be legalised?—Yes. I think it is a good principle in localities where the number of children is not sufficient to warrant the expenditure being incurred by the State. I think that in these cases the residents might help themselves a little bit.

102. Do you think the taxation should come out of the small locality or be general over the district for those purposes?—I think it might be imposed over the locality.

103. Then, do you think that in small country districts, unprovided with schools, the settlers away in the back blocks should be asked to supply sums out of their own pockets for schools, when the larger town districts are asked to provide nothing?—I do not think they can expect the same facilities as the people in the towns.

104. Why not?—Because they go out into the back blocks to get land cheap. They get some advantages, and I do not think they can expect the same facilities that are provided in the usual way in more thickly populated centres. One cannot erect a school at the back door of every settler's house.

105. I will not presume the question. Do you approve of the principle that was adopted by the Committee with regard to rebuilding of school residences generally—that the money should be specially allocated?—As I said before, while I think there is no objection to your separating the items in making estimates of what is required, I do not think the Boards should be tied down so strictly.

106. How do you mean, "tied down"?—For instance, it says here, "The Committee are of opinion, therefore, that the Government should make provision for the following amounts:—namely, maintenance, school buildings," so-much; "rebuilding school buildings," so-much; "maintenance, teachers' residences," so-much; "rebuilding teachers' residences," so-much. Well, that is a good way of arriving at the amount required. I think that the maintenance of school buildings should include the maintenance of school residences, and that—

107. One moment. Is there anything to prevent that?—We do not know. We shall not know until the end of the year, when the Board presents its accounts to the auditor. We are not sure.

108. Supposing we make that modification, it will be satisfactory—will it?—I think maintenance should cover all the school buildings, although in arriving at the amount required you could separate them, because you have the cost of construction separate.

109. Then, with regard to rebuilding: Have you any objection to the principle laid down by the Committee for providing the funds and tying them up?—No. Of course, this table in the

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.

134. Supposing the Government disapprove of the site selected, what officer do they send to report to them, as a rule?—The only case we have had is the case of Kincaid Downs.

135. What officer was sent?—An officer of the Department—Sir Edward Gibbes.

136. Have you never had any other dispute in your district, or misunderstanding with the Government other than that with regard to the school at Kincaid?—Not that I remember.

137. Suppose a dispute arose within your district as to where a site should be—say, for instance, that your Board determined to place a school near the Lincoln College, because you thought that if the school were there the majority of the parents would be best inconvenienced, and that representations were made to the Government to override your decision and to have the school erected at, we will say, three miles away from Lincoln College. What officer of the Government do you think would be sent down to determine that?—I cannot say.

138. You have had no experience as to that?—No.

139. Would you think it a right thing that, in the event of such a dispute arising, the Government should send a Rabbit Inspector or a member of the Survey Department to report on the wisdom or otherwise of placing the school three miles from the site selected by the Board?—Generally, I should say no; but it might so happen that the Rabbit Inspector knew the locality better.

140. I understand your reply to be this, that you think the Rabbit Inspector might be as good a man to report on the matter as the officers of the Board and the Board itself?—I did not mean that at all. What I meant was that I should not regard a Rabbit Inspector as being suitable because he was a Rabbit Inspector, but he might have a good local knowledge of the district, and that might be quite sufficient reason for the Department to send him down to report.

141. But you would not think his recommendation would be of as much value as the decision of the Board?—The fact of his holding the position of Rabbit Inspector would not entitle him to give advice, but he might have other qualifications.

142. Speaking generally, you would not think he was as good an authority to decide the matter as the Board?—No, certainly not.

143. Coming to the matter of the votes. Mr. Allen asked you if you did not think that the general education vote for new buildings would be better dealt with direct from the Government. Is your opinion, in connection with the building grant, this: that for repairs and additions, and also new schools—in fact, all round—the Board itself is the best judge of what should be done in your district?—The Board and its Inspectors jointly, yes.

144. Unless they are competent to do that work they are really not competent to carry on at all?—Certainly.

145. If all their powers are to be gradually filched from the Boards in the way that has been the tendency recently, do you not think it is better to place the whole of the control under the Head Office, with the Inspectors at the Head Office; or would you give the Boards more power than is now contemplated?—The power to decide these questions should, I think, rest with the Boards and the Boards' Inspectors.

146. That is, as to the whole of the building work?—They of necessity have more knowledge of the cases that come before them.

147. If you require a new school now, even a small school, you are not able to go on with it, are you?—No.

148. The process is that you have to come to a decision about the matter, and then write to the Government recommending that it be done?—That is, if the Board favourably entertains the application.

149. And you now usually receive, I suppose, the stereotyped reply, that the matter will be considered, with others, when the estimates are being made up?—That stereotyped acknowledgement always comes, but I cannot say there has been any delay on the part of the Department in dealing with the applications. The Templeton one is now under consideration. I think it is about six weeks since that was sent up to the Department.

150. Supposing that three months ago you decided to erect a school, that there were twenty or thirty children who would attend, and you thought that a school was urgently wanted; you would have no means of going on with that work until after the public-works estimates were through this house—that is to say, there might be a delay of six or eight months before you would know whether the work was to be gone on with or not?—It would have to be delayed until the Board had obtained the sanction of the Department. I might refer to the Port Hills case. That is now under the Board's consideration, and has been for some two or three months, the question of site not having been settled. After the Board has fixed that up we have to apply to the Department.

151. Do you not think the tendency of the questions put to you just now regarding your allowances was to induce you to say that you could do with less than was allocated to you last year for the maintenance of schools and repairs to them?—The only question of the kind raised that I remember was with regard to the  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., but I think I made it quite clear that the Board would require the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. if additions and small schools were included.

152. As a matter of fact, the Boards are receiving under the new system as much as they received under the old, but owing to the way in which they are tied it is impossible for them to do the useful work they formerly did?—The Boards are receiving more under the new system, take it.

153. That is so, but still you are more tied up in your work of usefulness than you have been hitherto?—By the restrictions, yes; that is so.

154. Do you not consider that a number of those restrictions are unnecessarily harassing and lead to complications?—Yes, the Board thinks they are unnecessary, and they do harass it in its administration of local matters.

155. Do you think they will be of any permanent good in the administration of the money in North Canterbury?—I do not think any good will come of these restrictions in North Canterbury.



156. In consequence of your not having the final decision in the matter of a grant for an addition or a new building, is your influence as an administrative body being weakened?—I think so.

157. Are the people now going outside of the Board to the Government direct, and to members of the House direct to influence votes?—We have had two notices that the people are going to the Government direct over the Board's head.

158. You do not know that the people are writing to members asking them to use their influence?—In these two cases the people say they will appeal to the Government—not to members.

159. Do you think that because an individual Committee mismanages its affairs, or an individual Board may not do exactly what may be expected, that is a reason for taking away the powers from all Committees and the powers from all Boards?—No.

160. Following up that question of Mr. Allen's regarding the probability of Board's recommending undue amounts of expenditure because they are not directly connected with the raising of the money—is the tendency of the Boards not rather to avoid the addition of schools, because it takes away from the attendances of schools to which the children may be going in the meantime?—Speaking for North Canterbury I can say that the Board is unwilling to weaken other schools by the erection of small ones.

161. And the tendency is as far as possible not to add new schools?—That is so, in North Canterbury.

162. Generally speaking, you prefer that moneys to an equal amount to those now paid should be granted to the Board for building and maintenance and addition purposes, and you think that these moneys can be better expended by the Board on the advice of its officers than they could be from a central Department without such a staff of officers as the Boards keep?—Yes, speaking for North Canterbury only. The same with our Committees.

163. *Mr. Lewis.*] With regard to the question of small additions to schools, such as in the cases of Ladbrook's, Templeton, and Addington, I wish to trace from Mr. Lane the present procedure. The first application, I understand, Mr. Lane, comes from the local Committee, which has been duly elected by the householders?—That is so.

164. The first step the Board takes when the application comes in is to look through its Inspectors' reports to see if they have made any recommendations or remarks on the subject of want of additional accommodation or greater space at the school, or anything of that sort—I am speaking of additions solely?—Yes, they would ascertain from me if anything had been stated in the reports.

165. The next step would be to call in the Inspectors and ask them if they had any additional argument, or if they could in any way elaborate what was to be found in their reports. The Board examines its Inspectors in detail in regard to the application from the Committee?—There is provision made on the form for the Inspectors to state their recommendation in every case—on the Department's form.

166. After that the Board sends out some of its members to inspect the particular school and to report to the Board?—Yes. That is almost the first step after the application has been received from the Committee.

167. At all events, that is done. Can you suggest anything additional that might be done in the way of supplying the Board with the requisite information to lead it to a decision on the point?—No, not beyond what it has been the Board's practice to do.

168. If you should sever your connection with the Education Board, and the Government should appoint you to some local office in an advisory capacity, could you suggest any better method of arriving at a true estimate of the necessities and requirements of the particular school?—No, not to obtain more information than the Board at present obtains.

169. You cannot suggest anything by which the present system could be improved upon as a means of obtaining exact information?—No; and I might say that the Board always has to take the estimates given by the residents as rather liberal. That is where the danger creeps in. Residents put their children's names down, but it is not always safe for the Board to rely on the number given being the number of children that will attend.

170. That is more in reference to additions. I am confining myself solely to the question of additions. You have the attendance roll?—The attendance would determine the Board.

171. The attendance with reference to the floor-space?—Yes, and having regard to the disposition of the several classes.

172. You cannot suggest any additional precautions that could be taken?—No. I think the precautions may be considered complete when the Board and the Inspectors act together.

173. *Mr. Fowlds.*] When you replied to Mr. Mackenzie's question about the desirability of the Boards and the Inspectors having full power to administer the funds of the Board, you did not mean to convey the impression that the limitation which has been put on on the recommendation of the Committee, that a certain sum of money shall be specifically set aside for maintenance, should be abolished, did you?—Well, I think I made it plain before that the Board should have more freedom of action in the matter of expenditure.

174. That was with reference to small additions and small new schools?—Yes.

175. You do not object to the principle of a certain sum being specifically set aside which Boards shall expend on maintenance pure and simple?—I think "maintenance" should include alterations and small additions.

176. Supposing these small things are included, you do not object to a specific earmarking of the money for maintenance and these small additions?—No, provided these other things are included.

177. What we want to secure is that the State property—the schools—shall be kept in a proper state of repair, and that buildings shall not go for twelve or fifteen years without painting. If the power of the Boards is too extensive in that direction there is a danger that painting and other



necessary repairs will be neglected, and the money spent on the erection of the small new schools and alterations that you suggest should be included in maintenance. Can you suggest a limitation of the amount that a Board should expend on these alterations and new schools, apart from the actual upkeep of the buildings?—It is very difficult to answer that, because as far as the North Canterbury Board is concerned that has not taken place. As I say in this letter, the schools there are all in good order, and, as far as the North Canterbury Board is concerned, it has not been necessary to place any limitation on it.

178. But you said before that you would not suggest a differential treatment of the North Canterbury Board?—That is so. I think you must treat them all alike.

179. When the Committee knows that the condition of things that has been depicted exists in other districts, what division would you suggest as being a reasonable one to be tied up solely for maintenance, and what portion reasonable for spending on small alterations and new schools?—Personally, I am averse to this division—this restriction—this tying-up of the funds. I think that, although in determining the amount that shall go to each Board, it is very convenient and the best plan to separate the items; the Boards should be given a free hand, and that if it should appear that some Education Boards have not attended to the maintenance of their existing schools, the pressure of public opinion and the representations of those interested in the matter should be sufficient to call the Board's attention to it and to have it remedied.

180. Though that pressure of public opinion had not been sufficient in the past, you would not suggest that anything further should be adopted to secure better results?—I can only speak for the North Canterbury Board.

181. As to the question of the possibility of localities wanting a new school and going over the head of the Board of Education to the Department, have you any knowledge of a school having been granted that was not recommended by the Board?—In North Canterbury?

182. Or anywhere else?—I have no knowledge of the other districts, and it has not taken place in North Canterbury. This is the first year under the new system, and the only application the Board has submitted for a new school has been the Kincaid Downs one. The Board wanted the school, and the Department would not grant it.

183. You do not know of any case where a school has been granted over the head of the Board?—No. I am inclined to think the Department would be equally conservative with the Board in the matter of the expenditure of the money.

184. You said you thought that where a Board was agreed and its Inspectors were agreed that a new school should be erected in a certain place, it should be granted?—Yes.

185. Would you then recommend that that should prevail regardless of the amount of money for new schools to be allocated to any Board?—I think you cannot do better than leave it to the local Boards and the Inspectors.

186. Supposing that one Board applied for £10,000 and another Board applied for only £1,000 in any one year, if the Boards and their Inspectors were agreed, the schools should be erected?—Naturally, so large a difference would attract attention, and I think it would scarcely be probable that that would happen. I can only speak for North Canterbury, where applications are practically reviewed by the Board and the Inspectors.

187. Whether the continuance of a practice like that would lead to large expenditure by other Boards would entirely depend on the administration of those Boards. Your suggestion is that it should be left free to each Board, with its Inspectors, to agree as to where new schools should go, and when that agreement is come to the Department should find the money?—Yes.

188. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I am going to put a hypothetical case to you, Mr. Lane. Supposing that in the North Canterbury District urgent demands were made for a new school, and the Board was refused the necessary money by the Government: do you think the Board would then be justified in delaying painting or minor repairs to several schools in order to find the money necessary for this urgently needed new building?—No. I think it would be the Board's first duty to see that its existing schools were efficiently maintained.

189. Imagine the case to be that a number of children were growing up and some of them were nearly getting beyond the education age-limit. You would still say that it would be more important to paint and effect minor repairs to the several existing schools?—Such a case as you mention would be a very urgent case. All cases would not be so urgent, and the probability is that the Board could find the necessary funds under the old plan for dealing with urgent cases.

190. I mean under the present plan?—Under the present plan, of course, the application would go to the Department.

191. In my question I supposed that the application had been refused by the Department—the urgent application to the Board. What would be the best course of action, as between the Board building that new school or allowing these children to grow up in an outlying district without any education whatever?—Under the present procedure the question would be whether the Department would grant the money.

192. I am putting a hypothetical case?—If the Board had the decision in its own hands it would deal with such urgent cases and settle them.

193. In an urgent case where an application for a new school was referred to the Department and refused, do you think an Education Board would be justified in delaying the execution of repairs, painting, and so forth, of several buildings in order to find the money for this new school?—It would be a question with the Board as to which case was the more urgent of the two. If the application for a small new school was considered more urgent the Board would, if it had the power, deal with it.

194. Let me put it in this way: Prior to the present plan, when Boards were free to deal with building grants, which do you think would be the wiser plan for the Board to follow—to build the new school or do the painting and repairs?—So far as a Board under the old plan was concerned, it would depend on the urgency of the case—on the respective merits of the two cases. It

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

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

whole matter. Previously the Board had power to make additions to schools, or additions to teachers' houses. Now the power does not seem to be there.

231. It is not that the Department has assumed an authority which does not exist in the Committee's report, but that the Boards have not been given the money now, that is all?—That is so.

232. *The Chairman.*] Am I to understand your position to be this, speaking generally: You do not consider that applications should be made to the Government at all for individual grants of money, but that the Board and its officers should be the persons to determine how much money is wanted and how it should be allocated?—With one exception, and that is that where the need has been created by the action of the Government in making a settlement, I think it is a fair thing for the Board to ask the Government for the money.

233. That is the only case in which you think the Board should be compelled to make any application whatever to the Department?—That is the only case in which I think it would be necessary for the Board to go to the Department.

234. I mean to say that otherwise the Board is to decide how much money is to be spent and in what direction it is to be spent?—The Board and its Inspectors.

235. That is to say, that each Education Board shall have the power of determining, beyond any interference at all by the Department, what schools are necessary to be put up, what alterations are to be made, what money is to be spent in maintenance, what new buildings of any kind are to be put up—all without any check or control by the Department?—Yes, so long as the Boards' Inspectors are not opposed to any of the propositions. Of course, I only refer to the North Canterbury District, and my experience of the administration in North Canterbury.

236. So far as North Canterbury is concerned, the amount to be voted and the method by which it is to be expended are to be entirely under the control of the Board and its officials, without any control at all by the Government Department?—Yes.

237. With the exception of the one case of a school rendered necessary by a Government settlement, in which case the Board would make application to the Government for the money for the school?—In which case the Board might fairly make application for a special grant.

238. Well, how do you say that the amount of money necessary for the Board's purposes shall be arrived at?—If you remember, in my evidence I reserved one point—as to what basis should be taken in regard to new schools. I reserved that because it is a very difficult thing to arrive at as to what basis shall be taken.

239. You find fault with the way in which the money is to be given. You say the Board should have full control. Is there to be any method of allocation, or is each grant to be simply contingent upon application being made, the only condition precedent to a grant being made being that application is made by the Board?—I maintain that that opens up the question as to the basis on which you shall make the grant for new schools, and that is a very difficult one to arrive at. For the maintenance of schools and small additions as a school grows larger, which are not far removed from maintenance, a percentage basis is a fair one; but what basis you are going to take with regard to the erection of new schools I do not know.

240. The position is this: You find fault with our present system?—I might explain that it is the restrictions put upon the Board that we take exception to. The Board is taking no exception to this amount which is set down for it. It believes the amount will meet all its requirements, except, perhaps, with regard to newly settled districts; but it is the restriction that it objects to. As I said before, the Board cannot lengthen a teacher's room, it cannot put up a new porch, or an outbuilding, or a closet under this restriction placed upon it by the Department.

241. Will you put in concrete form your suggestion as to how this should be altered?—The Board and its Inspectors should be able to expend the grant as they think fit.

242. The grant for maintenance?—The whole of the grant; but as to how the grant for new schools should be arrived at, I have reserved that.

243. Can you possibly deal with one without the other? How are we to give you the money? Are we to give it to you in a lump for each year, or are we to give it to you when you ask for it? I want your opinion. The position taken up by some is this: The Board is a responsible body; it has efficient officers, and it is in the best position to know what is required in its district; therefore its representations to the Government should in all cases be acquiesced in. That is one position that is taken up. Can you suggest another?—That seems to be, perhaps, the proper one.

244. Then, the only way in which you suggest that this scheme can be made to work out satisfactorily is that the Government shall provide what moneys are asked from it by the Education Boards?—Backed up by their Inspectors.

245. Naturally?—Yes. To come to the bottom of it, that is really what it means; and if the Government found that the expenditure in one district were out of proportion to that in another, naturally it would make inquiries and ascertain if there were any particular reason for that expenditure.

246. *Mr. Hall.*] You very strongly urge, Mr. Lane, that the Inspector should be a check upon the Board. Seeing that the Inspector is the Board's officer and not the Government's officer, would that, in your opinion, be a sufficient check, or would the Government consider it a sufficient check?—I think that the Inspectors are sufficiently independent to state their views. So far as North Canterbury is concerned there is no doubt about it—the Inspectors would state whatever view they held. The Board does not act in the face of an unfavourable recommendation from the Inspectors.

247. It acts with the concurrence of the Inspectors?—It would not make an application in the face of an unfavourable report from the Inspectors.

248. Would you be surprised to learn that Boards have made applications in the face of the recommendations of the Inspectors?

249. *The Chairman.*] Has your own Board ever made an application that has not been backed up by the Inspectors?—Not that I remember. There may have been some cases so strong and so

conclusive as to the need for the addition to a school that the Inspectors were not asked, but that could not have taken place this year, because the form provided by the Department has a space for the Inspectors to put their recommendation in.

250. *The Chairman.*] What tenure of office have your Inspectors?—During the pleasure of the Board, subject to three months' notice, I suppose.

251. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Mr. Lane pointed to the difficulty of dealing with money for new schools. The need for new schools and the need for additional floor-space in existing schools both arising from the same cause—namely, increased population—would not the same difficulty attach to money required for additions to the existing floor-space of a school, Mr. Lane?—The same as in the case of new schools entirely?

252. Yes?—I think that when a school has been going on for some years and it wants a 10 ft. addition because the number of children on the roll is too large to be accommodated in the building, it is not quite the same. You could reckon it more like maintenance. The school has been started, and you must give them the proper space which the attendance requires.

253. Supposing that in the case of a newly settled district a Board found it necessary to increase the floor-space three times in ten years, what would your answer be then? Would not the difficulty of finding the money for the increased floor-space required be practically the same as it would in the case of a new school?—No, I do not think so; because with three additions in ten years naturally each enlargement would not be very great.

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APPENDICES.

A.

ORDINARY VOTES FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—GENERAL MAINTENANCE, REBUILDING, ETC., OF SCHOOLS AND RESIDENCES.

Education District.	Buildings belonging to Boards.										General Maintenance, &c., of School Buildings.						Additions and new School Buildings.			1902-3.		
	Wooden Buildings.					Brick and Stone Buildings.					Amount voted, 1903-4—Consolidated Fund, Vote No. 73, £19,250; Public Works Fund, Vote No. 93, £35,000; £54,250						Amount voted, 1903-1904. Public Works Fund, Vote No. 94, £16,000.			Additions and new School Buildings.		
	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.		
Average Attendance, 1902.	Number of School Buildings at End of 1902.	Number of Square Feet of Floor-space in Buildings entered in Column 2.	Present Cost of Construction of such Buildings as are described in Columns 2 and 3.	Number of School Buildings at End of 1902.	Number of Square Feet of Floor-space in Buildings entered in Column 5.	Present Cost of Construction of such Buildings as are described in Columns 5 and 6.	Amount required for Maintenance, &c., of such Buildings as are described in Columns 2, 3, 5, 6, and also for Teachers' Residences: as per Table A.	Distribution of Amount voted for 1902-3—£47,000.	Distribution of Votes as in Column 8, with Modifications named in Note † below.	Amount added to bring Grant up to Amount paid in 1902-1903.	Total grants paid for General Maintenance, &c.	Grants for Rent of Buildings used for School purposes ‡.	Total Distribution.	Amount granted for New Schools.	Amount granted for Additions.	Total.	For Residence.	Amount granted for New Schools.	Amount granted for Additions.	Total.		
Anckland ..	24,476	355	367,315	179,492	2	3,416	2,150	14,588	9,950	12,917	12,917	46	12,917	1,615	1,127	2,742	447	999	1,340	2,339		
Taranaki ..	8,914	67	67,254	32,944	..	..	1,631	1,750	1,750	377	1,750	..	1,750	873	..	873	..	..	..	..		
Wanganui ..	9,585	186	144,142	70,304	..	..	3,585	4,200	2,999	1,201	4,200	..	4,200	205	..	205	..	384	812	1,196		
Wellington ..	12,580	189	180,851	86,943	1	7,500	4,719	5,300	4,098	1,202	5,300	..	5,300	1,322	1,760	3,082	..	..	..	..		
Hawke's Bay ..	7,046	73	120,893	57,322	1	..	3,292	2,700	2,862	..	2,862	..	2,862	1,890	..	1,890	..	..	..	..		
Marlborough ..	1,745	32	23,249	11,742	1	2,651	792	2,950	677	273	950	..	950	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Nelson ..	4,809	99	92,497	45,584	2	1,892	2,792	2,250	2,402	..	2,402	5	2,407	..	300	300	..	255	..	255		
Grey ..	1,380	30	28,787	14,154	1	..	785	2,250	696	154	850	..	850	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Westland ..	1,015	30	92,332	11,249	1	5,870	931	800	845	..	845	..	845	..	100	100	..	287	200	200		
N. Canterbury ..	16,681	190	260,568	124,856	6	32,074	8,600	6,300	7,255	..	7,255	..	7,255	141	..	141	..	453	..	453		
S. Canterbury ..	4,455	63	46,311	23,360	7	28,171	2,845	1,900	2,034	..	2,034	..	2,034	..	..	..	..	250	..	250		
Otago ..	17,784	190	196,983	96,242	28	110,311	8,795	6,500	7,523	..	7,523	..	7,523	763	1,010	1,773	..	539	1,100	1,639		
Southland ..	8,241	144	121,992	60,656	2	2,040	4,230	3,550	3,569	..	3,569	..	3,569	..	1,384	1,384	..	..	360	360		
Totals	113,711	1,548	1,673,174	814,848	50	193,925	118,855	47,000	49,250	3,207	52,457	51	52,508	6,809	5,681	12,490	..	3,167	3,812	6,979		
																447				447		
																					£12,987	

\* Column 8 shows the distribution of the ordinary votes for maintenance, rebuilding, &c., as proposed by the Education Committee, the total being £57,035. Details are given in Table A.  
 † Column 9 shows the actual distribution of the amount (£47,000) of the same votes for the year 1902-3.  
 ‡ Column 10 gives the amounts that would be payable under the proposals of the Committee, omitting item (b), namely, £3,713, in Table A and in the item (a) in the same table, lowering the rate from 34 per cent. to 33 per cent., by which £4,072 is saved.  
 § A comparison of the figures in columns 9 and 12 will show that the grants made in 1903-4 were greater, except in five cases, than the grants made in 1902-3. In five cases the grants for each year were the same; the addition to the sum proposed to be paid in 1903-4 is entered in column 11.

## B.

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 28th October, 1904.

As requested by you, I have the honour to append brief notes on the evidence of Messrs. Hill and Lane, in regard to the allocation of the votes for school buildings.

I regret to say that I do not find in the evidence of Mr. Hill much that would help me to make practical suggestions to the Committee, except in respect of one matter which the Department already has in hand—namely, the preparation of plans and specifications for different types of schools, to be available for use of the Boards.

I find myself in agreement with Mr. Lane in two main points—(1.) That it is necessary that the Boards should be allowed to use some of the ordinary building grants for small alterations and minor additions; but I think that the total amount so used by any Board should not exceed, say, one-fifteenth of its ordinary building grant, with the further limitation that the cost of any additions for more than 200 square feet of class-room floor-space should not be paid out of this grant in any one year for any school of Grade 8 or under, and that of not more than 400 square feet in any school over Grade 8. (2.) I agree further with Mr. Lane that while the different items—repairs, rebuilding, re-painting, and so on—of schools and residences should be carefully taken into account in assessing the amount of the ordinary building grants payable to the several Boards on the basis employed last year, yet discretion should be allowed to the Boards in expending the money granted for the several purposes named. If a Board does not repair its buildings, it will have to rebuild them sooner; if it repairs them carefully, it may make them last longer than the average time.

Special building: I do not agree with the opinion that the Boards should determine whether a grant should be given out of the special votes for new schools, and for additions rendered necessary by increase of population. My emphatic belief, based upon experience, is that it would lead to an enormous waste of public money. It must be remembered that the Inspectors are officers of the Boards (and not, as they should be, of the central Department), a fact which also suggests the existence of a defect in the present system—namely, that the Department finds it difficult to arrive at the true merits of any case that is brought before it.

It is very difficult to provide proper education in remote districts without excessive expenditure.

I am strongly of opinion that very much more should be done in conveying children to central schools than is done at present. Where this is not possible, it would in most cases be far better for both economy and efficiency to have two half-time schools under one good teacher than one ordinary school under two poorly paid and probably inefficient teachers.

There still remain some cases in which it is not possible to use either of these expedients. I am not sure that it would not be wise to have some such safeguard as the following: "That no new school with a probable average attendance of less than twenty or twenty-five children shall be established within six (? ten) miles of any school, unless it is first shown to the satisfaction of the Minister that there is no other means of providing efficient and regular instruction for the children concerned.

The obvious objection to the above is that it is an interference with the discretion of the Education Boards. Legislation, moreover, would be required. In any case I would not recommend that any grant should be given for building such a school.

Schools destroyed by fire: In regard to schools destroyed by fire it should be remembered that the Boards for many years have been receiving certain amounts as ordinary building grants, including in the purposes of such grants presumably the means to rebuild worn-out schools. Therefore, if a school that is partly worn out were destroyed by fire, the Board could not equitably claim the whole of the cost of rebuilding from the Government, from whom it has already received part of the cost. This argument would be quite complete if the ordinary building grants in the past had been sufficient. As, however, they were not, in my opinion some relaxation of the rule set up last year might be desirable, although I cannot say that I think it absolutely necessary except in very small education districts. It was not contemplated, either in my recommendations or, I believe, in the Committee's report last year, that any sinking fund should be established by Boards, nor is it necessary. Each Board should look far enough ahead to be able to say what schools would require rebuilding, say, within five years; the grants given are sufficient to enable the due proportion of these schools to be rebuilt each year. If a school is burnt down the payment out of the year's building grant of part of the cost of rebuilding the school that was burnt down may postpone for a short time the rebuilding of some other school, but the Board will not receive any less money on the whole; indeed, it will generally receive a little more than if the school had not been burnt down.

I have, &amp;c.,

G. HOGGEN,

Secretary for Education.

The Chairman, Education Committee, House of Representatives.

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