

8. A small grant of £45 was asked for to make an addition to the *Waihopo* School. A similar grant had been voted for a similar addition to the adjacent school (*Houhora*). This school has a roll number of 48, and an average attendance of 41 pupils. At *Waihopo* the roll number is 57, and the average attendance 42. The case of *Waihopo* is even more urgent than that of *Houhora*. The Inspector recommends the work, but the Minister has not yet seen fit to authorise a grant of the small sum asked for.

9. The *Northcote* School is overcrowded. The population in that locality is increasing with astonishing rapidity. A special grant of £770 was asked for in February last to enlarge the school. The Minister decided to postpone the application until after the visit of the Inspector-General to Auckland. The Board learns with sincere regret that Mr. Hogben's illness renders it very doubtful as to how long this application must stand over. In the meantime the School Committee have entered a well-grounded protest against the inaction in this matter.

10. *Epsom*.—A remarkable and unprecedented increase of population is taking place in this suburban district, and the school is altogether too small for the number of children living in the vicinity. A new and separate classroom for infants is urgently required, and the sum of £770 was applied for in March last, but no authority has yet been given for the work to proceed.

11. At *Ararua*, a permanent settlement in the Kaipara district, there has been a marked increase of population and school attendance. A married male teacher has been placed in charge of the school. He has succeeded in obtaining temporary accommodation for himself and his wife, but this will not be available after next month. He has searched the district for seven miles round in vain to endeavour to rent a house; and the erection of a teacher's dwelling appears to be an absolute necessity. It is hoped that a grant for this purpose will be forthcoming immediately.

12. The grant for building and furnishing the manual-training schools at the three Auckland centres did not suffice to defray the whole cost of these works. A further sum of £1,299 8s. 1d. had to be provided out of the ordinary income of the Board. Repeated applications have been made to the Minister for a reimbursement of this outlay. The Minister has expressed his approval of the plan and design of the buildings as being neither too large nor too elaborate. Surely the Government will not persist in requiring the Board to bear this heavy expenditure unaided. I shall be very glad, sir, if you can make it convenient to visit one of the centres and to judge for yourself of the nature of the buildings and of the value of the work for which they are being utilised.

13. In October last year the Board applied for the sum of £3,205 6s. 4d. to provide the necessary apparatus for this year's session of the Auckland Technical School. After six months the Board has succeeded in getting grants to the extent of £1,531 15s. 10d. (less than one-half of the amount asked for). But, in regard to the apparatus for the electrical and mechanical engineering classes, the conditions imposed by the Department are somewhat harrassing, and are likely to cause some confusion if they are rigidly observed.

Thanking you, sir, for this opportunity of placing our grievances before you, which we do in the hope that you will remedy the same,

Hon. A. Pitt, Acting Minister of Education, Auckland.

RICHARD HOBBS, Chairman.

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 8th June, 1904.

I have the honour to inform you that since my return to Wellington I have investigated the matters referred to in your letter of the 31st ultimo, and I have to make the following remarks thereon.

There is no desire to deprive your district of anything that it can properly claim from the special votes for school buildings. These votes are not granted for proportionate distribution, but for distribution according to ascertained needs, and there is therefore no question of what is any district's share. As a matter of fact, however, your Board received the largest share of the vote both in 1902-3 and 1903-4, while of the sums authorised but not paid on the 31st March last by far the largest portion is credited to Auckland, being nearly £2,000 more than that of the Board next on the list.

With regard to the particular cases of which you make mention, the following is the position:—

*Oturu*.—With this is involved an application for a grant of £485 for a school at Te Awahou, of which you have omitted to make any mention. On the 10th December last it was pointed out to your Board that these two places were quite close together, and on the 22nd March a reminder was sent that this remark had not been answered. On the 28th March your Secretary replied that the Department's letter of the 10th December had been referred to the Inspector, who had not yet visited the district, and that he would as soon as possible advise the Board where the school should be. Nothing further has been received from the Board on the subject, so that in this case it is the Board and not the Department that is responsible for the delay. The value of your statement that each of the Board's claims had been supported by the recommendation of an Inspector of Schools is very decidedly reduced by the knowledge that in these two cases, at any rate, the recommendation has been given without precise knowledge of the circumstances.

*Kawhia*.—As you say, an application from the Board for a grant of £1,100 for a new school and residence was met by an offer from the Minister to hand over, from the end of last year, the Native school and dwelling. These are excellent buildings, the school affording accommodation for at least sixty children. The Board accepted the offer last October, and it is a matter for surprise that, so far, no advantage has been taken of it, notwithstanding representations from the School Committee that the building now being used is unsuitable for the purpose. The Board's application for £440 to enlarge the school on the ground that it would not accommodate both European and Maori scholars was made without any knowledge of whether or not the Maori children would continue to attend under the altered conditions. I am glad to see that the Board takes such an interest in the education of these Maoris, but may point out that not so very long ago it forwarded, with an expression of its concurrence, a resolution of a School Committee objecting to the attendance of Maori children at a public school. No doubt you are aware that the Maoris of *Kawhia* have vigorously protested against the loss of their school, and have applied for the establishment of another. This question is now under consideration. If the application is agreed to the public school need not be enlarged at present. It affords accommodation for sixty, and the average attendance for last quarter was only forty-one.

*Wade*.—This also is complicated by there being another application for another school in the locality, of which you have said nothing. In 1902, upon a case submitted by the Board for the Department's opinion, it was decided that removal of the *Wade* School to a more central position was better than the alternative proposal to build a new school at *Orewa*, about three miles off. A year later (September, 1903), without referring to this decision, the Board applied for grants both for building at *Orewa* and for enlarging (without removing) the *Wade* School. The Department's reply to this (October, 1903) was that both claims could not be granted, seeing that building at *Orewa* must certainly render unnecessary an enlargement at the *Wade*. Nothing has since been heard of *Orewa*. The Department considers the first decision to be the proper one, on the ground of its affording a reasonable prospect of finality to the demands of the district, and because it has not been shown how a mere enlargement of the *Wade* School will provide for the children at *Orewa*, who live too far away to attend it. An erroneous statement in your letter to which I must call attention is that your Inspectors have on each occasion recommended enlargement at the *Wade* as the best course to adopt. The proposal to build at *Orewa* was recommended by an Inspector.

*Walton, Mangatete, and Waihopo*.—In the first two cases I will ask Cabinet to grant the sums for which you have applied, and I have authorised payment of the small amount named in respect of *Waihopo*.

*Northcote and Hamilton West*.—In these cases I am making special arrangements to obtain fuller information than is afforded by the correspondence.

*Epsom*.—I am not satisfied that so large a sum as £770 is needed at this school. I observe that at *Newmarket* School, which is near at hand, there is a large amount of room available. Nevertheless, in consideration of the undoubted increase of population in this district I will recommend Cabinet to grant a sum of £300, subject to a satisfactory proposal being submitted for the expenditure of the money.

*Ararua*.—I will accept your statement as to the impossibility of obtaining proper accommodation for the teacher, but the sum for which you ask is too large. I will recommend Cabinet to make a grant of £350.