

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 capititation 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-