

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.