

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