

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 convenienceed, 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, I 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.