

necessary repairs will be neglected, and the money spent on the erection of the small new schools and alterations that you suggest should be included in maintenance. Can you suggest a limitation of the amount that a Board should expend on these alterations and new schools, apart from the actual upkeep of the buildings?—It is very difficult to answer that, because as far as the North Canterbury Board is concerned that has not taken place. As I say in this letter, the schools there are all in good order, and, as far as the North Canterbury Board is concerned, it has not been necessary to place any limitation on it.

178. But you said before that you would not suggest a differential treatment of the North Canterbury Board?—That is so. I think you must treat them all alike.

179. When the Committee knows that the condition of things that has been depicted exists in other districts, what division would you suggest as being a reasonable one to be tied up solely for maintenance, and what portion reasonable for spending on small alterations and new schools?—Personally, I am averse to this division—this restriction—this tying-up of the funds. I think that, although in determining the amount that shall go to each Board, it is very convenient and the best plan to separate the items; the Boards should be given a free hand, and that if it should appear that some Education Boards have not attended to the maintenance of their existing schools, the pressure of public opinion and the representations of those interested in the matter should be sufficient to call the Board's attention to it and to have it remedied.

180. Though that pressure of public opinion had not been sufficient in the past, you would not suggest that anything further should be adopted to secure better results?—I can only speak for the North Canterbury Board.

181. As to the question of the possibility of localities wanting a new school and going over the head of the Board of Education to the Department, have you any knowledge of a school having been granted that was not recommended by the Board?—In North Canterbury?

182. Or anywhere else?—I have no knowledge of the other districts, and it has not taken place in North Canterbury. This is the first year under the new system, and the only application the Board has submitted for a new school has been the Kincaid Downs one. The Board wanted the school, and the Department would not grant it.

183. You do not know of any case where a school has been granted over the head of the Board?—No. I am inclined to think the Department would be equally conservative with the Board in the matter of the expenditure of the money.

184. You said you thought that where a Board was agreed and its Inspectors were agreed that a new school should be erected in a certain place, it should be granted?—Yes.

185. Would you then recommend that that should prevail regardless of the amount of money for new schools to be allocated to any Board?—I think you cannot do better than leave it to the local Boards and the Inspectors.

186. Supposing that one Board applied for £10,000 and another Board applied for only £1,000 in any one year, if the Boards and their Inspectors were agreed, the schools should be erected?—Naturally, so large a difference would attract attention, and I think it would scarcely be probable that that would happen. I can only speak for North Canterbury, where applications are practically reviewed by the Board and the Inspectors.

187. Whether the continuance of a practice like that would lead to large expenditure by other Boards would entirely depend on the administration of those Boards. Your suggestion is that it should be left free to each Board, with its Inspectors, to agree as to where new schools should go, and when that agreement is come to the Department should find the money?—Yes.

188. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I am going to put a hypothetical case to you, Mr. Lane. Supposing that in the North Canterbury District urgent demands were made for a new school, and the Board was refused the necessary money by the Government: do you think the Board would then be justified in delaying painting or minor repairs to several schools in order to find the money necessary for this urgently needed new building?—No. I think it would be the Board's first duty to see that its existing schools were efficiently maintained.

189. Imagine the case to be that a number of children were growing up and some of them were nearly getting beyond the education age-limit. You would still say that it would be more important to paint and effect minor repairs to the several existing schools?—Such a case as you mention would be a very urgent case. All cases would not be so urgent, and the probability is that the Board could find the necessary funds under the old plan for dealing with urgent cases.

190. I mean under the present plan?—Under the present plan, of course, the application would go to the Department.

191. In my question I supposed that the application had been refused by the Department—the urgent application to the Board. What would be the best course of action, as between the Board building that new school or allowing these children to grow up in an outlying district without any education whatever?—Under the present procedure the question would be whether the Department would grant the money.

192. I am putting a hypothetical case?—If the Board had the decision in its own hands it would deal with such urgent cases and settle them.

193. In an urgent case where an application for a new school was referred to the Department and refused, do you think an Education Board would be justified in delaying the execution of repairs, painting, and so forth, of several buildings in order to find the money for this new school?—It would be a question with the Board as to which case was the more urgent of the two. If the application for a small new school was considered more urgent the Board would, if it had the power, deal with it.

194. Let me put it in this way: Prior to the present plan, when Boards were free to deal with building grants, which do you think would be the wiser plan for the Board to follow—to build the new school or do the painting and repairs?—So far as a Board under the old plan was concerned, it would depend on the urgency of the case—on the respective merits of the two cases. It