

11. In the opinion of the Committee, the sum paid for rebuilding schools and residences should be kept by the Boards in a separate account and used for rebuilding purposes only. In case a school or a residence is not rebuilt, the sum paid towards the rebuilding should be refunded to the Treasury. Further, the Committee consider that none of the money allotted for the maintenance or rebuilding of schools and residences should be expended in building schools in new districts.

12. The Committee find that the special vote for school buildings has been expended in grants for new schools and for additions to existing schools to provide for increased attendance due to new settlement or increase of population in the district. All applications made by Education Boards for such grants are dealt with on their merits. The grants are paid upon the completion of the work, progress payments being made if necessary. In order to enable the Department to judge of the merits of each case, the Board concerned fills up a form giving such information as the population of the district; the number of children of school age within three miles of the site; the names and distances of the nearest schools; the size, average attendance, and staff of the existing school (if any); the size and estimated cost of the proposed school or addition, including purchase of site, furniture, fencing, and outbuildings; and the recommendation of the Inspector is attached. The Department makes such inquiries as seem desirable as to the character of the new settlement, whether permanent or not; as to the possibility or otherwise of providing for the educational wants of the district by railway or other public conveyance; and the Cabinet decides each case upon the facts as they finally appear. The Committee consider that the system thus outlined should be adhered to.

13. The probable damage due to such causes as earthquakes not being calculatable beforehand, we recommend that such damage should be met by a separate item in one of the votes granted by Parliament for school buildings.

14. The rates of payment allowed in paragraph 4, (c), above for the rebuilding of wooden school buildings are based upon the following assumptions:—

- (i.) That the average life of all such buildings for the colony is thirty-five years.
- (ii.) That 10 per cent. of the schools need rebuilding when from twenty to twenty-five years old.
- (iii.) That 25 per cent of the schools between twenty-five and thirty years old need rebuilding.

It would be necessary to revise these rates from time to time according to the actual average age of the buildings as ascertained in each district, and in any case payments for buildings over thirty years old ought not to be continued longer than would give each Board a sufficient sum to rebuild all schools in its district of thirty years old and upwards.

15. The Committee find the total value of school buildings and residences at present cost of construction to be:—

	£	£
School buildings, wood	814,850	
" stone or brick	118,855	
Total, school buildings		933,705
Residences, wood	203,712	
" stone and brick	29,714	
		233,426
Total, school buildings and residences		1,167,131

The amount provided last year for maintenance and renewal of school buildings and residences was £47,000.

The proposals submitted in this report will entail an estimated expenditure of £57,659.

12th November, 1903.

Supplementary Report.

The Minister of Education having stated subsequently to the adoption of our main report on this subject that the amount available for the ordinary votes for school buildings would, for the year 1903-4, be £50,000, we recommend that the basis for the allocation of such sum be the scheme submitted with our main report, with the following modifications, namely:—

(a.) The omission of the amount for rebuilding teachers' residences—£3,713 (see line (h) in Table A, attached to this report); and

(b.) The reduction of the allowance for the maintenance of wooden schools from $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 3 per cent. per annum, which makes a saving of £4,072 (see line (a) in Table A).

The Committee attach hereto returns showing the amounts required by the several Boards for the maintenance, &c., of buildings according to the scheme set forth in our main report, and also the distribution of the votes for the current year, with the modifications named above.

17th November, 1903.