

156. In consequence of your not having the final decision in the matter of a grant for an addition or a new building, is your influence as an administrative body being weakened?—I think so.

157. Are the people now going outside of the Board to the Government direct, and to members of the House direct to influence votes?—We have had two notices that the people are going to the Government direct over the Board's head.

158. You do not know that the people are writing to members asking them to use their influence?—In these two cases the people say they will appeal to the Government—not to members.

159. Do you think that because an individual Committee mismanages its affairs, or an individual Board may not do exactly what may be expected, that is a reason for taking away the powers from all Committees and the powers from all Boards?—No.

160. Following up that question of Mr. Allen's regarding the probability of Board's recommending undue amounts of expenditure because they are not directly connected with the raising of the money—is the tendency of the Boards not rather to avoid the addition of schools, because it takes away from the attendances of schools to which the children may be going in the meantime?—Speaking for North Canterbury I can say that the Board is unwilling to weaken other schools by the erection of small ones.

161. And the tendency is as far as possible not to add new schools?—That is so, in North Canterbury.

162. Generally speaking, you prefer that moneys to an equal amount to those now paid should be granted to the Board for building and maintenance and addition purposes, and you think that these moneys can be better expended by the Board on the advice of its officers than they could be from a central Department without such a staff of officers as the Boards keep?—Yes, speaking for North Canterbury only. The same with our Committees.

163. *Mr. Lewis.*] With regard to the question of small additions to schools, such as in the cases of Ladbroke's, Templeton, and Addington, I wish to trace from Mr. Lane the present procedure. The first application, I understand, Mr. Lane, comes from the local Committee, which has been duly elected by the householders?—That is so.

164. The first step the Board takes when the application comes in is to look through its Inspectors' reports to see if they have made any recommendations or remarks on the subject of want of additional accommodation or greater space at the school, or anything of that sort—I am speaking of additions solely?—Yes, they would ascertain from me if anything had been stated in the reports.

165. The next step would be to call in the Inspectors and ask them if they had any additional argument, or if they could in any way elaborate what was to be found in their reports. The Board examines its Inspectors in detail in regard to the application from the Committee?—There is provision made on the form for the Inspectors to state their recommendation in every case—on the Department's form.

166. After that the Board sends out some of its members to inspect the particular school and to report to the Board?—Yes. That is almost the first step after the application has been received from the Committee.

167. At all events, that is done. Can you suggest anything additional that might be done in the way of supplying the Board with the requisite information to lead it to a decision on the point?—No, not beyond what it has been the Board's practice to do.

168. If you should sever your connection with the Education Board, and the Government should appoint you to some local office in an advisory capacity, could you suggest any better method of arriving at a true estimate of the necessities and requirements of the particular school?—No, not to obtain more information than the Board at present obtains.

169. You cannot suggest anything by which the present system could be improved upon as a means of obtaining exact information?—No; and I might say that the Board always has to take the estimates given by the residents as rather liberal. That is where the danger creeps in. Residents put their children's names down, but it is not always safe for the Board to rely on the number given being the number of children that will attend.

170. That is more in reference to additions. I am confining myself solely to the question of additions. You have the attendance roll?—The attendance would determine the Board.

171. The attendance with reference to the floor-space?—Yes, and having regard to the disposition of the several classes.

172. You cannot suggest any additional precautions that could be taken?—No. I think the precautions may be considered complete when the Board and the Inspectors act together.

173. *Mr. Fowlds.*] When you replied to Mr. Mackenzie's question about the desirability of the Boards and the Inspectors having full power to administer the funds of the Board, you did not mean to convey the impression that the limitation which has been put on on the recommendation of the Committee, that a certain sum of money shall be specifically set aside for maintenance, should be abolished, did you?—Well, I think I made it plain before that the Board should have more freedom of action in the matter of expenditure.

174. That was with reference to small additions and small new schools?—Yes.

175. You do not object to the principle of a certain sum being specifically set aside which Boards shall expend on maintenance pure and simple?—I think "maintenance" should include alterations and small additions.

176. Supposing these small things are included, you do not object to a specific earmarking of the money for maintenance and these small additions?—No, provided these other things are included.

177. What we want to secure is that the State property—the schools—shall be kept in a proper state of repair, and that buildings shall not go for twelve or fifteen years without painting. If the power of the Boards is too extensive in that direction there is a danger that painting and other