

whole matter. Previously the Board had power to make additions to schools, or additions to teachers' houses. Now the power does not seem to be there.

231. It is not that the Department has assumed an authority which does not exist in the Committee's report, but that the Boards have not been given the money now, that is all?—That is so.

232. *The Chairman.*] Am I to understand your position to be this, speaking generally: You do not consider that applications should be made to the Government at all for individual grants of money, but that the Board and its officers should be the persons to determine how much money is wanted and how it should be allocated?—With one exception, and that is that where the need has been created by the action of the Government in making a settlement, I think it is a fair thing for the Board to ask the Government for the money.

233. That is the only case in which you think the Board should be compelled to make any application whatever to the Department?—That is the only case in which I think it would be necessary for the Board to go to the Department.

234. I mean to say that otherwise the Board is to decide how much money is to be spent and in what direction it is to be spent?—The Board and its Inspectors.

235. That is to say, that each Education Board shall have the power of determining, beyond any interference at all by the Department, what schools are necessary to be put up, what alterations are to be made, what money is to be spent in maintenance, what new buildings of any kind are to be put up—all without any check or control by the Department?—Yes, so long as the Boards' Inspectors are not opposed to any of the propositions. Of course, I only refer to the North Canterbury District, and my experience of the administration in North Canterbury.

236. So far as North Canterbury is concerned, the amount to be voted and the method by which it is to be expended are to be entirely under the control of the Board and its officials, without any control at all by the Government Department?—Yes.

237. With the exception of the one case of a school rendered necessary by a Government settlement, in which case the Board would make application to the Government for the money for the school?—In which case the Board might fairly make application for a special grant.

238. Well, how do you say that the amount of money necessary for the Board's purposes shall be arrived at?—If you remember, in my evidence I reserved one point—as to what basis should be taken in regard to new schools. I reserved that because it is a very difficult thing to arrive at as to what basis shall be taken.

239. You find fault with the way in which the money is to be given. You say the Board should have full control. Is there to be any method of allocation, or is each grant to be simply contingent upon application being made, the only condition precedent to a grant being made being that application is made by the Board?—I maintain that that opens up the question as to the basis on which you shall make the grant for new schools, and that is a very difficult one to arrive at. For the maintenance of schools and small additions as a school grows larger, which are not far removed from maintenance, a percentage basis is a fair one; but what basis you are going to take with regard to the erection of new schools I do not know.

240. The position is this: You find fault with our present system?—I might explain that it is the restrictions put upon the Board that we take exception to. The Board is taking no exception to this amount which is set down for it. It believes the amount will meet all its requirements, except, perhaps, with regard to newly settled districts; but it is the restriction that it objects to. As I said before, the Board cannot lengthen a teacher's room, it cannot put up a new porch, or an outbuilding, or a closet under this restriction placed upon it by the Department.

241. Will you put in concrete form your suggestion as to how this should be altered?—The Board and its Inspectors should be able to expend the grant as they think fit.

242. The grant for maintenance?—The whole of the grant; but as to how the grant for new schools should be arrived at, I have reserved that.

243. Can you possibly deal with one without the other? How are we to give you the money? Are we to give it to you in a lump for each year, or are we to give it to you when you ask for it? I want your opinion. The position taken up by some is this: The Board is a responsible body; it has efficient officers, and it is in the best position to know what is required in its district; therefore its representations to the Government should in all cases be acquiesced in. That is one position that is taken up. Can you suggest another?—That seems to be, perhaps, the proper one.

244. Then, the only way in which you suggest that this scheme can be made to work out satisfactorily is that the Government shall provide what moneys are asked from it by the Education Boards?—Backed up by their Inspectors.

245. Naturally?—Yes. To come to the bottom of it, that is really what it means; and if the Government found that the expenditure in one district were out of proportion to that in another, naturally it would make inquiries and ascertain if there were any particular reason for that expenditure.

246. *Mr. Hall.*] You very strongly urge, Mr. Lane, that the Inspector should be a check upon the Board. Seeing that the Inspector is the Board's officer and not the Government's officer, would that, in your opinion, be a sufficient check, or would the Government consider it a sufficient check?—I think that the Inspectors are sufficiently independent to state their views. So far as North Canterbury is concerned there is no doubt about it—the Inspectors would state whatever view they held. The Board does not act in the face of an unfavourable recommendation from the Inspectors.

247. It acts with the concurrence of the Inspectors?—It would not make an application in the face of an unfavourable report from the Inspectors.

248. Would you be surprised to learn that Boards have made applications in the face of the recommendations of the Inspectors?

249. *The Chairman.*] Has your own Board ever made an application that has not been backed up by the Inspectors?—Not that I remember. There may have been some cases so strong and so