

Mr. J. T. QUIN moved, That the gentleman in question be allowed to take his seat as representative of the Bay of Islands.

Motion agreed to, and Mr. R. T. Wrathall took his seat.

Dr. J. C. COLLINS (Cook Hospital Board) stated that he was asked to apologize for the absence of Mr. K. S. Williams, Chairman of the Waipu County Council, as, owing to the death of a relative in Auckland, Mr. Williams was obliged to go up there, but he hoped to be back here on Thursday morning.

The PRESIDENT said that he would ask the Secretary of Internal Affairs to read the resolutions adopted by the Conference of Education Boards, which sat yesterday, and which had been forwarded to him by the Chairman, Mr. M. Dalziel.

The resolutions were read by Mr. Hislop as follows:—

*“Local Government Bill.”*

“Resolutions adopted at the Conference of Education Boards, held in the Wellington Education Board's Office on Monday, 20th May, 1912.

“1. That this Conference of the Education Boards of the Dominion, while refraining from any expression of opinion upon the general provisions of the Local Government Bill, respectfully urges that the inclusion of education within the scope of the measure is fraught with serious danger to, and is inimical to the best interests of, our State system of education.

“2. That the administration of education is so widely divergent in character from all the other subjects embraced in the Bill, and is of itself of such importance, as to call for separate administration by Boards especially chosen for the important work.

“3. That the transfer of the administration of education from Boards closely in touch with parents, and specially elected for the important work, to Councils charged with a variety of other and widely divergent functions would lead to diminished efficiency without securing any economy of cost.

“4. That the increase in the number of bodies charged with the administration of education will lead to increased cost without securing greater efficiency; and that the proposal to cast a part of the cost of primary education upon local rates is destructive of the national character of our education system, and entails new burdens upon the taxpayer without providing any compensatory advantage, while exposing schools to the danger of being starved.”

The PRESIDENT intimated that the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs had received the following letter from Mr. J. R. Palmer, Town Clerk, Wellington, which he would read for the information of delegates:—

“SIR,—

“Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Wellington, 21st May, 1912.

“By direction of the Wellington City Council I have the honour to inform you that at their last meeting they adopted the following resolution with reference to the proposed Local Government Bill, viz.: ‘That they have given consideration of the main provisions of the Local Government Bill, and they are unable to approve of the Bill in its present form, as it would destroy the independence of the city, and leave its finances and affairs at the mercy of a constituency with which it has no community of interest. They are also of opinion that the Bill would entail upon the city a large increase in its contribution to hospital and charitable aid, and a new charge in respect of education. They cannot see any benefit that will accrue to the city from the Bill in any way comparable to the grave risks involved.’

“I have the honour to ask that you will be good enough to bring the above resolution under the notice of the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, and also before the Conference convened to discuss the Bill.

“I have, &c.,

“J. R. PALMER, Town Clerk.

“The Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, City.”

The Conference then adjourned till 2 p.m.

On resuming,—

The PRESIDENT intimated that the Executive appointed by the Conference had already held a meeting at the close of the morning session, when it was resolved to recommend that the Conference now proceed with a general discussion upon the Local Government Bill. He therefore formally moved accordingly.

Mr. W. S. MASLIN (South Canterbury Hospital and Charitable Aid Board) asked the President if he intended to prevent any motion being moved, or could a motion be moved dealing with any portion of the Bill, or were they to keep entirely to a discussion on the general principles of the Bill in a broad and definite sense?

The PRESIDENT replied that in the meantime he thought he would be consulting the convenience of the Conference if, instead of having a discussion confined to any particular part of the Bill, they discussed the Bill as a whole. He ruled that the discussion now should include the Bill generally.

Mr. MASLIN said he desired to move, That Part X be deleted from the Bill, because if it were deleted it would save the setting-up of a Committee. Was it open for him to move the deletion of the part in question?

The PRESIDENT replied that he had given his ruling—namely, that the discussion would take place on the entire and not on any particular phase of the Bill at all. Particular portions of the Bill would come up for discussion later on.

Mr. R. EVANS (Chairman of the Waipara and Eyre County Councils) asked the President to explain what he meant by his statement in reference to the cost of administration.

The PRESIDENT replied that what was included in the cost of administration was clerical expenses, advertising, the salary of the clerk, and where there was a Road Engineer, the probability was that his salary was also included.