

being included in the provincial system. All the same, he was prepared, as representing this section of the Dominion, to go fully into the Bill by-and-by, and to discuss whether it was practicable in any way to merge certain Boards into larger bodies, or to make suggestions for the betterment of the administration even of education. However, after the declaration by the Minister of Education upon the subject of education, he doubted very much whether it was worth their while as a Conference to go very fully into the details affecting that subject. With regard to one of the big questions which would arise, and which he left very much to the men who knew more about it than he did, he thought it would be found that a good deal of saving in expenditure could be brought about by merging many of the smaller Boards into the adjacent larger bodies. He had had many years in which to think over these matters, and this was especially the case with education, which he had been connected with for forty years; so that he was quite familiar even with the old provincial system of management. For some dozen years he had worked under the old provincial system, and had been consulted, as an expert, by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston when that gentleman drew up the first Education Bill. As he had been from first to last under the Board system, he might say he should be very sorry to see any sudden movement made to throw aside a working system which had through a number of years, bit by bit, developed into a system which was recognized not only in this country, but outside of it, as at any rate quite up to date; and therefore he would advise his younger friends to think twice before they hurried on to rapid changes. All good government was brought about cautiously and slowly. This Bill was very hurried; it would make very drastic changes in several directions, and it would make them at once.

Mr. LIFFITON (ex-Mayor of Wanganui) asked if the Bill provided for the same mode of election as the old Act.

The PRESIDENT said no. Under the existing Act, of course, the School Committees elected the Boards of Education, but under this Bill, if it were passed, so far as the education question was concerned, that would be one portion of the work of the Provincial Government, which would be elected to take over several functions, of which education would be one.

Mr. PARR (Mayor of Auckland) would like to say a few words from the point of view a large city took of this Bill. He spoke for the City of Auckland more particularly, but would fain believe that the views he should attempt to give utterance to would also be the views of the large municipalities of this country. So far as Auckland was concerned, there was no demand whatever for the Bill. The cities strongly objected to the idea of being incorporated in a huge county or province, extending fifty, sixty, or it might be a hundred miles from the city or municipality. They strongly objected to the idea of having a provincial rate levied upon them which might be spent fifty, sixty, or a hundred miles away from them, and they strongly objected to the idea of provincial liabilities being cast upon the cities. It might be said that it was the duty of the cities to help the up-country districts with their roads, but it should be recollected that the cities of the Dominion had yet to make their own streets. It was not as though the cities were not already heavily rated. He did not think the ratepayers were likely to stand much more in the way of rates; and when they remembered the work to be done within their own boundaries in the direction of making the cities respectable it would be seen that it was not fair to ask them to find money for districts fifty or a hundred miles away. The creation of any body having jurisdiction over the cities with big rating and taxing powers must be viewed with suspicion, and, indeed, with positive disfavour, by the cities. It seemed to him the weakness of the Bill consisted in the fact that there was an endeavour in one measure, and by a like method of treatment, to deal with two essentially different problems—the problem of the city and the problem of the country; and he would venture to say that the medicine that was good for one would not be good for the other, and *vice versa*. The mistake was that they were proposing to give to two different patients the same medicine, though the patients were suffering from entirely different complaints. The difficulty in the country was the overlapping of various authorities. As the President had forcibly pointed out, in the country districts they had Road Boards, River Boards, County Councils, and Drainage Boards operating different functions over the same ground. That was the problem for the country districts. The problem for the cities was essentially different. The problem for the large cities was that the cities were surrounded by numbers of small boroughs, and what was wanted was greater cities, formed by the unification of the boroughs—a greater Christchurch, a greater Dunedin, a greater Wellington, and a greater Auckland. This was the objective of municipal statesmanship, and this the Bill was not going to help. They were moving now along very satisfactorily under the Municipal Corporations Act, which gave diverse powers. It gave practically all the powers they wanted, and if they wanted more they could express their wish through the triennial Conference. They were, he believed, satisfied with the powers already given them by legislation for the unification of the boroughs. This unification had been largely brought about in Christchurch and Dunedin, and in Auckland they were beginning to use these powers, and no further legislation was needed to bring about the unification of local authority, which was the real objective of municipal politics throughout the Dominion. The creation of any other body in the cities would not help the municipalities to amalgamate, but would create another body, and destroy that community of interest they desired to promote. It seemed to him that, so far as the cities and the large Harbour Boards were concerned, it would be a public misfortune to have them incorporated by a measure of this kind. Take the Harbour Boards, for instance. In Auckland the Harbour Board was spending two millions of money upon an elaborate harbour scheme, and they had the Harbour Board elected upon a democratic franchise. He took it they did not intend to interfere with that, but it was well this view of the matter should be made public. It would be a misfortune for such bodies to be brought under the Bill, and he hoped that the larger cities and boroughs would be excluded from its operation. He was sure he was only expressing the feeling in the large cities when he said that the people viewed this Bill with disfavour.

Mr. G. J. GARLAND (Auckland) was of opinion that the Bill traversed unnecessary ground. He had listened with much interest to the remarks of the President, and was pleased to notice