

unsatisfactory, inasmuch as they did not know what was coming next year. They should know exactly what amount they were entitled to for the purpose of roading the district, so that the work could be carried on in a permanent way. To form roads merely for the time being was expensive and unsatisfactory. If the Government would set aside a sum of money, or load the land to such an extent as to insure the roading of the district within a certain time, settlers would know exactly how to proceed with the work. There was a difficulty which existed in subsidizing the rates in connection with the goldfields districts. In Ohinemuri they had a considerable area of goldfields land, and a very valuable asset it was at the present time. If they received a subsidy on the rates, instead of the grants which were made at present, they would be considerably hampered in the development of those mining districts. There were the Talisman and the Crown properties, as well as the Victoria Battery, which was connected with the Waihi Company. In all, it could carry a valuation of something like a million of money, but as far as rateable value was concerned it was not worth one penny to the county. In Waikino they did not receive one cent of duty. The Government recognized this position, and they made the usual Government grants for mining purposes. If those grants were done away with the mining industry would be crippled in those particular districts. He wanted to see an assured finance, and they should be assured of a certain amount of money throughout the goldfields districts. The money should be granted to the local bodies in a sum that would enable them to distribute it properly. In connection with education, he recognized that the legislation relating thereto was very unsatisfactory. The administration was not altogether what it should be. It would be just as well if Education Boards, especially the Auckland Board, recognized that there were districts outside of the main city requiring attention in the matter of education as well as themselves. So far as the country districts were concerned, they were far below the standard of education existing in the larger centres. The qualifications of the teachers were not equal, and, apart from that, the money devoted to the School Committees was insignificant, whilst in the towns there was sufficient money. He would defy any man, no matter what business ability he might possess, to conduct the duties associated with a School Committee upon the money receivable. As a matter of fact, the members of the Committee had to dip their hands into their own pockets, and he was glad to say that they had men in his district who were prepared to do so. He was not in favour of giving the control of education to the proposed Provincial Councils, although the country districts would be better rid of the Education Boards. It was true that the Committees appointed or elected the Education Boards; but the membership of Boards fell to those who were in the larger centres of the education district. In Waihi they had three schools with one Committee of eleven. If the Thames were entitled to a voting-power of thirty-six, why should Waihi only have eleven? He hoped the Education Committee which they were setting up would devise some new scheme. So far as the franchise was concerned, he approved of it. As a matter of fact, a man who had no actual property was as much interested in the development of the district in which he resided as the man with property. He came from a district in which the population was moving, and he was in a position to judge.

Mr. C. J. PARR (Mayor of Auckland) asked leave to make a personal explanation, as some of his remarks had been misapprehended by the Mayor of the Thames and another delegate yesterday afternoon. The Mayor of the Thames had told the Committee just now that the city representatives, evidently referring to himself (Mr. Parr), had declared that there was no community of interest between the cities and the country. In reply to that he would tell the Conference that nothing was further from his thoughts than to make any such statement, nor did he make any such statement. The point was this: the cities would object to any measure of reform in local government which would put upon the large cities the expense of making drains, bridges, and roads one hundred miles away from their confines. In respect to that there was no community of interest.

Mr. H. M. DRIVER (Chairman of the Bruce County Council) said that though he had been silent during the debate he had listened with great interest to the speeches delivered by delegates to the Conference. In his opinion, the Government was to be congratulated upon bringing down a measure that was of supreme importance to the country, and in giving the country delegates an opportunity of criticizing it; and there was no doubt it had undergone a very large amount of criticism during the time it had been before them, so that if the Bill survived at all it would be in a very greatly emasculated form. He did not propose to say very much in connection with the various matters that had come before the Conference, as they had been sufficiently debated already, and the speeches now delivered were practically repetition of what had been said before. He must, however, admit that some of the speeches delivered had been masterly, and had put the position very clearly before members, and also before the country. In this connection he particularly referred to the speeches by Messrs. Harley, Maslin, and Studholme. From these gentlemen they had had a masterly exposition of the various provisions of the Bill as they affected the people concerned. What he wished to refer to—and he would do so very briefly—was the question of education. It seemed to him it was a wise determination on the part of the Government to delete that portion of the Bill. He believed that the Conference on the subject would have a most valuable effect, because, while he considered the education system of the Dominion was one they were all rightly proud of, still there was a great amount of money expended in connection with the system the expenditure of which might easily be avoided; and in this direction the Committee to be appointed might, after consideration, bring certain points before the Minister of Education, and these would no doubt receive the consideration they were entitled to. He knew, and he believed every member of the Conference knew, that in connection with the city schools a very large amount of money was absolutely thrown away. This was the case with the expenditure on manual training—the education which took children from the Fifth or Sixth Standards in the city schools and put them in the technical