

the Conference any further upon it. If they were determined to strike out the Provincial Councils, it would be a mere waste of time to consider the creation of the proposed Local Government Board.

The PRESIDENT remarked that he was about to express the fervent hope that they would not have a long discussion. In his opinion, the Conference was ready to vote.

Mr. McLAREN (Wellington) would confine himself to one point, which seemed to him important. They should have officers appointed to assist the Minister in carrying out his duties, but it depended, in his judgment, very largely upon what the functions to be exercised really were, as to whether they ought to agree to the Board or not—whether or not it was needed. The Minister had hinted that the Board, if appointed, would in certain instances have to act as a Commission of inquiry, and he wished to draw attention to the fact that although they had agreed to the deletion of clause 10—“Nothing in this Act shall be so construed as to render it obligatory on the Local Government Board to hear evidence or otherwise act judicially in the exercise of any power, jurisdiction, or authority vested in it”—that clause was in the negative form, and the mere deletion of it did not affirm that the Local Government Board would receive evidence and act judicially, and he could not find anything else in the Bill that would place the responsibility on the Board so to act. His main point was that he believed all matters relating to the allocation of liabilities and the settlement of disputes should be dealt with by the Courts of the country rather than by any Department or State Board. At the present time, therefore, he could not support the motion in favour of the Board, as he was not quite sure it could exercise the functions it was suggested the Board should have.

A delegate moved, That the question be now put.

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT.—The question is that Mr. Studholme's amendment stand instead of the original resolution.

Amendment (by Mr. Studholme)—“(1.) That a Local Government Board be set up. (2.) That such Board be composed of the Minister of Internal Affairs and three other members (not being members of Parliament), such members to be elected by Parliament for a term of not less than five years, and to be dismissable only by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. (3.) That the functions and duties of the Board be not in excess of those embodied in this Bill, except in so far as may be from time to time delegated to it by special Act of Parliament. (4.) That these functions and duties be confined as far as possible to powers of recommendation to the Governor in Council. (5.) That the Board submit an annual report to Parliament on local government in general, and on the work of the Board for the past year, such report to include a full and complete list of all recommendations they have seen fit to make to the Governor in Council”—negatived on the voices.

The PRESIDENT.—The question is that clause 1—“That this Committee is in favour of the formation of a Local Government Board to take over and exercise the functions of the Minister and the Governor in Council”—be adopted.

A division being called for, this proposition was negatived on a show of hands, and declared lost.

The PRESIDENT.—Clause 1 being negatived, clause 2 naturally falls with it.

Mr. MIDDLETON moved the adoption of clause 3: “That this Conference does not agree with the establishment of Provincial Councils.”

Clause 3 agreed to.

Mr. MIDDLETON moved clause 4: “That this Committee is wholly opposed to the present method of distribution of public moneys by way of promiscuous grants for roads, bridges, and such other works, and favours the substitution of a system of increased subsidies on some definite principle.”

Clause 4 agreed to.

Mr. MIDDLETON moved clause 5: “That while this Committee is entirely opposed to the continuance of the present system of promiscuous grants, at the same time it is of opinion that the Government should faithfully carry out all engagements or obligations for works that it has already committed itself to, and the Committee appreciate the Hon. the Minister's promise in this respect.”

Clause 5 agreed to.

Mr. MIDDLETON moved clause 6: “That this Committee strongly emphasize its opinion that the complete roading of new lands simultaneously advance with the settlement thereof. Such roading to be carried out at the cost of the General Government.”

The PRESIDENT presumed this resolution was in accordance with the speech he had made on the previous day—namely, that the main road to the block to be opened up should be made, and that the work of road-making should be afterwards given to the settlers, with a view to enabling them to purchase their holdings.

Dr. COLLINS, regarding this resolution, desired to ask if it also referred to Native lands.

The PRESIDENT understood it meant the complete roading of new lands, no distinction being drawn between European or Native lands.

Mr. J. G. WILSON asked if it would not mean that all roads should be completed.

The PRESIDENT observed that the clause had been very carefully worded, and it said, “the complete roading of new lands simultaneously advance with the settlement thereof.”

Mr. MIDDLETON thought he might explain the meaning of the Committee. The Committee's opinion was that it would be unreasonable to ask the Government to make all roads in advance of settlement; but that the roading should be completed continuously as settlement went on.

Clause 6 agreed to.

Mr. MIDDLETON moved clause 7: “That this Committee is of opinion that the system of subsidies should be regulated by the necessities of the district rather than by the amount of rates that may be collected. That Parliament should annually decide what sum is available for sub-