

Amendment declared negatived on the voices, and on a division being called on a show of hands there voted for the amendment nineteen, and an overwhelming majority of delegates voted against it, the President remarking that there was no need to count them.

Amendment negatived, and clause 2—“*Road Districts.*—The Committee recommends that the present dual system of control by counties and road districts should cease, that the county system be the system that should be retained, and that due regard should be given to the interests of the districts now under the control of Road Boards with regard to representation and otherwise. The Committee also recommends that in the meantime some simpler method be adopted for merging Road Boards into counties than at present exists, such as by taking a poll”—agreed to.

Clause 3 of the report of No. 2 Committee—namely, “That with respect to the smaller rural boroughs and those Road Board districts adjoining the cities or forming part of the suburban area of the cities or boroughs, this Committee is of opinion that the Government should set up a Commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act to report as to which of these bodies can, in the public interest, be amalgamated with the counties or adjacent boroughs, as the case may be. This Committee expresses the view that such amalgamation in many cases is desirable, and should, if necessary, be compulsorily effected”—agreed to.

Mr. JULL (Chairman of No. 3 Committee) moved the following recommendation of that Committee: “*Town Districts.*—The Committee recommend that all town districts with a population of 500 and upwards be formed into boroughs; that all town districts with a population of under 500 be merged into counties, provision being made in the Counties Act for the establishment of local Committees, by election or otherwise, to administer under the control of the County Council; that the counties should have the power now exercised by the present town districts, which may be delegated to committees.”

Mr. STUDHOLME (Ashburton) said that at the request of Ashburton he desired to move, after the words “town districts with a population of under 500,” the following words: “That the Commission of inquiry agreed to be set up in connection with clause 3 of the report of No. 2 Committee should also report with regard to those town districts which are coterminous with boroughs as to whether they should be merged into the county or into the coterminous borough.” There was a strong feeling in Ashburton that the contiguous district should be merged into the town or into the county.

Mr. McLAREN (Wellington) seconded the amendment. It applied to town districts what had been applied to road districts.

Mr. MOORE (North Canterbury) thought these districts should be merged into one or the other. They did not need to make a hard-and-fast rule in the matter.

The PRESIDENT said he was going to suggest that it was not necessary to insert the amendment on the main question. The position would be met if, after the word “county,” they inserted the words “or into adjacent boroughs.”

Mr. STUDHOLME accepted the suggestion of the Minister in preference to what he had proposed; and

Mr. JULL accepted the amendment as part of the clause he moved.

Mr. EVERETT (Nelson) said already the counties were suffering quite enough by the creation of boroughs. He thought there should be a minimum population of 1,000. He would move, That “500,” after “town districts with a population of,” be struck out, and “1,000” inserted in lieu thereof.

Mr. BAILEY (Waikato) opposed the amendment. It was simply smashing up everything.

Mr. FISHER (Southland, Wallace, and Fiord) said that a few years ago a town district was created in his district in accordance with the present Act, and they desired to be retained in that position. It would be a great mistake to put them into the borough.

Mr. RITCHIE (Wanganui) said that whoever got the town districts, the counties should not get them.

The amendment moved by Mr. Everett was negatived, and the clause was agreed to.

“*Cemetery Boards.*—The Committee recommend that the same provisions of administration as recommended to apply to Road Boards should apply to Cemetery Boards.”

Mr. JULL, in moving the clause, said he desired to correct the wording of it. The Committee wished it to read as follows: “The Committee recommend that the same provisions of administration as recommended to apply to domains should apply to cemeteries.”

Mr. W. S. MASLIN (South Canterbury) said, before they proceeded to Cemetery Boards, seeing that they had decided that all town districts with a population of less than 500 were to be merged into counties or adjacent boroughs, they should also deal with boroughs that had a population of less than 500. It seemed an anomaly to wipe out town districts with a population of less than 500 and continue boroughs that were in a worse condition as far as population was concerned. The reason why Committee No. 3 did not deal with the matter was that they thought the other Committee would do so.

The PRESIDENT said he would have to rule against Mr. Maslin on this point, on the ground that the matter had already been dealt with by resolution No. 3 of Committee No. 2—“Smaller Rural Boroughs and Road Boards in Cities.”

Mr. J. FISHER asked whether the counties had power to delegate their powers in connection with cemeteries to individuals.

The PRESIDENT.—Do you mean to one individual, or to a body who would constitute themselves a committee?

Mr. FISHER asked, Could the Council delegate power in connection with each cemetery to, say, four or five people?

The PRESIDENT did not know that they could under the present law, but did not think there would be any difficulty in arranging that what could be called a Cemetery Committee should be established under the control of the county.