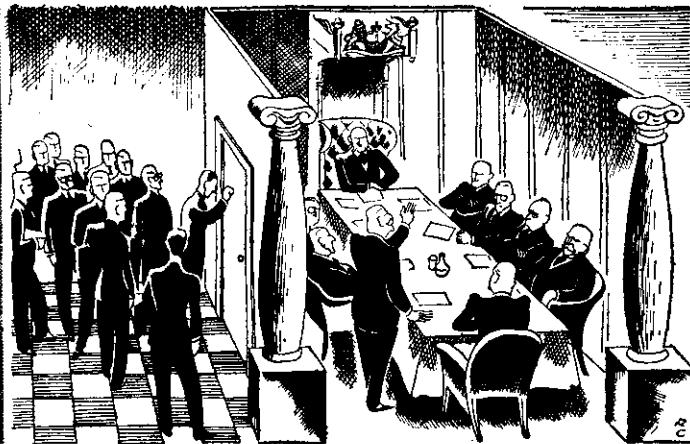


TOO YOUNG?



TOO OLD?

CITY COUNCILS

"I DON'T think that you can generalise on this question of age," said a city councillor. "You get old men at 30 and young men at 60. It is not the age but the man that counts. There must be quite a proportion of my council about 60 and over, and I think only one under 45. Probably this is partly due to the war. After the war, we will have men young in age but old in experience, and perhaps they will supply the answer for us for the future."

"ALL things being equal," said an older member of a city council. "I would say that it is better to have the young men on public bodies and in Parliament. But generally, it is impossible for them to get seats. People just don't vote for men until they are well known and have a personal following."

HOSPITAL BOARDS

THE *Listener* asked a business man with wide experience of hospital boards and other public bodies whether he considered that the personnel on these tended to be elderly rather than youthful.

"In my opinion," he replied, "we have too many men on all governing bodies whose feet are in 1942 and their minds in 1914. It is difficult for elderly men to look at problems through the eyes of young people. But the case of hospital boards is perhaps a little special. The men and women have come on them for the good that they can do, and have often given up more showy forms of public life in order to do so. It is true that the majority of members are elderly, but I would not say that they are suffering from too much age. You need experienced men with a mellow outlook, because they are dealing with human beings rather than with policy."

EDUCATION BOARDS

"I AM reminded of the reply of a certain public speaker that I heard a few years ago, that 'wisdom does not come with false teeth and grey hair,'" said a representative of the school teachers. "Education Boards generally have quite a large proportion of men retired from something else. I personally don't think it is a good thing. They tend to become old men's clubs. The paid officials end by doing all the work and are often more hindered than helped by the boards. How can it be changed? Well, it's hard to say. Officially, we believe that the system of election is all wrong. The boards are elected by the school committees. Apart from the fact that this is thoroughly undemocratic, it is not the best way of

A FORTNIGHT ago, a member of the New Zealand House of Representatives suggested that the men on the Treasury Benches were beginning to suffer from age. A month ago, the "Manchester Guardian" pointed out that the average age of Labour members of the House of Commons was higher than the average age of the Conservatives. Two years ago, Leicester Webb pointed out in his "Centennial Survey of Government in New Zealand" that the oldest Cabinet New Zealand has so far had, held office in 1906. (see opposite page).

The question is, of course, much wider than politics. To discover how average people feel about the problems of youth and age in other spheres of life, we have asked a large number of men and women of all ages whether they feel that age in New Zealand remains too long in positions of power, or whether the position is that youth is too indolent or too indifferent to assert itself. Here are some of the answers.

bringing forward the best men. A public election is more likely to bring forward a better class of person. If you have to address a public meeting and be heckled, you have to keep alive."

THIS was not, however, the opinion of an Education Board member, who said: "The school committee members have shown their interest by accepting the job on Education Boards, and so they are likely to take a very live interest in the elections, especially as the school committees have such close dealings with the boards. The Wellington Education Board for instance, has up to the present been comprised of men who are perhaps conservative. Many have been there a considerable time and have lost a good deal of their dash. Things tend to be referred back and back again. A younger man is more inclined to work for the changing of regulations if they are becoming out of date. You need some mature and some younger members. If they were all young, you might get an unbalanced outlook. Since the recent elections, there are three new men between 38 and 42 out of the 16 members. The rest would probably be upward of 50 with two or three upward of 65."

CHURCH BODIES

OUR next approach was to a young clergyman who has recently had contacts with all denominations in a national religious movement. "There is in the Church a fairly widespread prejudice against age," he said. "Some parishes are inclined to think a clergyman old at 55, and when parish vacancies are being filled, there is frequently a request for a young and energetic man. In my view, this prejudice is ill-founded. Some men are old at 40 and stone-dead at 50;

others are still alive and abreast of contemporary thought and life at 70. It cannot be said that the churches in New Zealand are governed by old men. Church leaders usually retire very judiciously when they feel they are getting past their responsibilities."

"AFTER all, a man is as old as he feels, and I don't consider that the slightly-larger proportion of older members on vestries and church councils generally is to be deplored," commented a well-known clergyman (aged 58). "Of course I like to see a fair sprinkling of younger people coming on. But I must confess that I don't go dewy-eyed about Youth as a thing admirable in itself, and I don't altogether agree with these who maintain that Youth is the period of idealism, and that progress is Youth's prerogative. As William James says, old fogeyism is not confined to age, and it's old fogeyism rather than age which is the curse of so many of our governing bodies."

SPORTS BODIES

WE had always had an impression that young devotees of sport spent their off-the-field moments thinking disrespectfully of the greybeards who occupied the best seats on such institutions as the Rugby Union and the Cricket Association. This has been dispelled by the following opinions:

EX-ALL BLACK (aged 40): "When people are young, they should be playing—it's only when they're past playing age that they should resort to taking seats on the Rugby Union. Actually, there are no greybeards on the Rugby Union, but even if there were, it's no objection, provided that they are still closely in touch with the game. I have no patience with the fallacy that

the battle is always to the young. Let's forget the administrative side and think in terms of the actual playing of the game. I've known men reach their football prime between 35 and 40, playing as we call it 'in the middle of the pad-dock' and doing a great deal better than the young ones who dash frantically round the edges of the field like terriers chasing seagulls. And you'll always find that the best captain is one with a good many years of experience behind him. Now take golf—look at Arthur Duncan, who's 65, and still one of the best golfers in the country. And look at the New Zealand Golf Council. I wouldn't mind betting that most of the members of that are well over 65, yet there's nothing wrong with the job they're doing."

REPRESENTATIVE of Cricket Association (aged 30): "I don't think anyone could complain of age on the Cricket Association. Of 13 members, five are from 30-40, five from 40-50, and there are three over 50. The over-fifties came in only because so many of the original members are overseas. And in the 40-50 group, four of the members are players, and the fifth is an umpire."

ARTISTS

A MEMBER of the Council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts said: "Maturity counts a great deal in the personnel of a council aiming at presenting contemporary art to the public, chiefly because it is impossible for a young person to absorb all the knowledge there is to be acquired about art through the ages. A person who is well educated in art matters should not become more narrow through the years; in fact, he should become the very opposite. However, it is good to have a mixed personnel, with the younger people to leaven the whole with their fresh outlook on experimental work—as long as the experiment is not accepted as necessarily lasting. It must be remembered that youth is capable of being as intolerant as age."

AN artist said: "Age itself is neither a qualification nor a disqualification for office in any governing body, but possibly younger people are more able to adapt themselves to contemporary conditions and changes in outlook and thought. So far as art is concerned, the need is for our institutions to be in the charge of properly qualified persons, by which I mean those who have not only practical knowledge but who also understand the philosophy of art and its cul-

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