

829. From your knowledge of the business I ask you to say whether it would be beneficial or otherwise to the association?—I may say that I have watched the career of the Insurance Department from its earliest days in 1874. I worked under various Colonial Treasurers as Ministerial heads of the department, and I have also watched the working of the whole institution under that system. I have also for the last two years watched the working under the Board. I am of opinion that the office has reached such dimensions now that, with the voluminous work the Treasurer has to perform, he cannot give that attention to the work which a body of men could give. For that reason, I believe, Major Atkinson proposed that a Bill should be introduced for the constitution of a Board, instead of a Ministerial head as previously. I believe he recognized that his time was so much taken up in other matters he could not give that attention to the insurance business which it required. For that reason a Board was appointed.

830. *The Chairman.*] You are giving us Major Atkinson's opinion; we are asking your opinion?—I am of opinion that there should be a Board to carry on the business.

831. *Mr. Mackenzie.*] You have referred to the business of the Treasurer being of a voluminous nature: I presume you are aware that any Board formed would be composed of business-men—that it would not likely be formed of men having nothing else to do?—Yes, I am aware of that.

832. You could not have a Board formed of men who would give all their time to the business?—No.

TUESDAY, 6TH JULY, 1886. (Mr. ORMOND, Chairman.)

Mr. S. W. D'ARCY IRVINE in attendance, and further examined.

*Witness* handed in printed book of instructions to agents, general letter of agreement and form of bond, and form of Inspector's confidential report; also the following return showing the percentage of persons in the colony insured in the Government Insurance Office:—

Total in force at the 31st December, 1885, insured in Government: Out of every 100 persons in the colony, 4; out of every 100 adults, 7; out of every 100 male adults, 12. Issued during 1885: 8 policies were issued for every 1,000 persons in the colony, 14 for every 1,000 adults, and 23 for every 1,000 male adults. Total population, exclusive of Maoris, 578,820 (1886 census); total adult population (sixteen and over) according to proportion in 1881 census, 322,982; total male adult population according to proportion in 1881 census, 186,586. In force at the 31st December, 1885: Average number of policies for each person, .04; policies for each adult, .07; policies for each male adult, .12: average amount insured for each person, £11 3s. 5d.; for each adult, £20 0s. 5d.; for each male adult, £34 13s. 1d. Issued during 1885: Average number of policies for each person, .008; for each adult, .014; for each male adult, .023: average amount insured for each person, £1 9s. 8d.; for each adult, £2 13s. 3d.; for each male adult, £4 12s. 2d. 1886 census: Total population, exclusive of Maoris, 578,820; estimated total adult population, exclusive of Maoris (sixteen and over), 322,982; estimated total adult male population, exclusive of Maoris (sixteen and over), 186,586. The ages of the people enumerated at the census of 1881 have not yet been tabulated. The foregoing estimates of the adult population have been arrived at by applying to the number of the whole population recently ascertained the proportions of adults (sixteen and over, as per formula) that obtained in 1881. Thus: In 1881, the population over sixteen amounted to 55.8 per cent. of the whole number; the males over sixteen amounted to 59.7 per cent. of the total number of males.—WM. R. E. BROWN, Registrar-General. 3rd July, 1886.

833. *Mr. Gore.*] Do you, in your reports, recommend any appointments of managers or agents?—Yes; I do when occasion requires.

834. Who do you send in your reports to?—To the General Manager.

835. You do not send them to the Board direct?—No.

836. Are they submitted to the Board?—It has not been the practice of the General Manager in the past to place them before the Board. He peruses them himself. The figures in the report are checked by the Accountant's branch; but the reports are not laid before the Board. I may say that, in some cases, the directors have asked for certain reports, and have been supplied with them.

837. Did you recommend any one for the Dunedin appointment?—No. I recommended that an expert should be appointed, and I was prepared to submit an officer who, I thought, would carry out the duties efficiently.

838. *The Chairman.*] With reference to that appointment, was the former agent at Dunedin satisfactory in his management of the office?—Fairly so.

839. Is Mr. Clapcott more efficient in his present capacity than in the combined office?—I think so.

840. Does Mr. Driver give his whole time now to the business of the association?—I believe the Board have had some correspondence in reference to that matter, and he has written to the Board on the subject. So far as I know, I expect that he should give all his time.

841. Is it the practice for the chief agents in the different large districts to give their whole time?—Yes.

842. And, as a matter of opinion, do you consider that the business ought to have in those cases the whole time of the agent?—Yes.

843. Would the conducting of other business by an agent operate injuriously upon the business of the association?—Yes. We have so much opposition from other insurance companies to contend against that it is absolutely necessary the agent should give his whole time to the work of the association.

844. *Mr. Gore.*] Did you report against the appointment of any gentleman to the position of agent?—No.

845. *The Chairman.*] For what portion of the business of the association, in your opinion, is a Board specially required?—Well, I think, for all the business.

846. Could not the ordinary departmental business be conducted efficiently by one General Manager, he being an expert?—The office has now reached to very large dimensions, and, I think, in all similar institutions there is a Board of Management.

847. Would not a Board be more essential for the purpose of considering investments?—That would be a very important part of its functions.