

You take power to do certain things—"to establish and maintain an efficient brigade for the suppression and extinction of fires, and for protecting life and property from loss or damage thereby, and to furnish such brigade with such equipment as it deems necessary." Will it not require buildings? You have power to acquire land and no power to build upon it, and the question might crop up when you came to borrow money. With regard to clause 18, that is all right if the Bill refers to the rating districts I refer to, but there must be power to appoint superintendents and deputy-superintendents. There must be a superintendent to each brigade. With regard to regulations the Boards have power to make, I submit that the regulations should be a great deal broader than they are at the present moment. It has been suggested that there should be a salvage corps. I know that the question of salvage corps is a matter of debate between the municipalities and the insurance companies; but there is absolutely no debate on what we call fire police, and we have them in Wellington. It seems to me that there should be power given to the Board to provide fire police, and what is to be paid them is a matter to be considered. In addition, the Board should have power to order inquests on fires of a suspicious nature, and have direct representation at inquests or inquiries.

8. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] In what way?—To appear and lead evidence. At present it is done by the police; it is not done by the firemen—men with special training fitting them to look into these questions. The Board should have power to install fire-alarm circuits and make by-laws relating to public buildings. At the present moment you will probably know from your own knowledge that the municipalities deal with public buildings—they have them inspected from time to time. I am referring to theatres and places of public concourse mentioned in section 22, subsection (3).

9. *The Chairman.*] That is as to precautions in regard to fire, &c.?—Yes. At the present time the municipalities receive a licensing fee for certain buildings, and for other buildings they do not receive license fees, but the whole of these buildings have to be inspected, and by section 23 of the Municipalities Act certain regulations have to be properly complied with. It seems to me that that is a duty which ought to be delegated to the Board. There is no real objection to it: take the case of the Licensing Act, where the licensing fees are received by the municipalities, while the question of whether or not there shall be licenses is left to the Licensing Committee. So that it is not unusual that one body has the right to say what is a proper building, while another body has the right to collect the revenue from it. It will then be necessary to adopt into the Act schedule 13 of the Municipal Corporations Act, and such other machinery as is deemed to be necessary.

10. *Mr. Ell.*] But there is not the competent authority?—I know your authority for that. At the present moment we have in Wellington a Superintendent of the Fire Brigade who is an officer appointed under the Act, and we are absolutely guided by him.

11. *The Chairman.*] Why not give that matter entirely to the control of this Board? The officer appointed by the Board would be absolutely free?—That is what I am suggesting. There is another point: I have every faith in this Bill being made to work excellently, but I think the question of the construction of large buildings ought to be in some way under the control of the proposed Boards. Take, for instance, the case of Messrs. Kempthorne, Prosser, and Co.'s building here in Wellington, which was only four brick walls extending from street to street, and with no brick partitions in the building at all. Under such circumstances there is no hope of checking the fire by partitions and fireproof doors; it is not only dangerous to people generally, but owing to the enormous heat it is especially dangerous to the fire brigade. Subsection (e) of clause 18: I should like to see this clause made clear. It is one that relates to the storage of kerosene and dangerous explosives. I know that there is a good deal of difficulty in the construction of our Dangerous Goods and Explosives Acts, and such a section needs to be very carefully considered by the law draftsman in order to see that it is going to provide for goods not only under the Explosives Act, but under the Dangerous Goods Act: it seems to me that it is not a very well-drawn clause at the present time. Clause (e) runs: "Regulating the storage of kerosene and of any dangerous explosive, and of empty crates, cases, and other packages, sawdust, shavings, hay, straw, and other inflammable substances." But I take it that there are lines of goods equally dangerous with kerosene. With regard to subsection (g), "Imposing fines not exceeding £5 for any breach of any such by-laws," I consider that £5 is not sufficient. I would submit with regard to fines to be imposed for the storage of dangerous goods and explosives that they should be very heavy indeed. A paltry fine of £5 for such a dangerous practice is nothing. Take an illustration: A man receives a shipment of explosives that he expects to send away any day; it may be cheaper for him to take the risk and be fined £5 than to go to the expense of sending the explosives away to the proper station. When a building containing explosives catches fire, one almost feels inclined to call the brigade away; but we cannot do that. We have to take the risk, and it is so dangerous to human life that I submit there should be a heavy penalty for the storage of goods of an explosive nature in such buildings. The next clause I desire to say a few words upon is clause 19. It is a clause giving power to borrow money, but I see that the Board may not borrow at any time more than £4,000. When I first read that section I thought that £4,000 might be a very small amount considering the value of a large fire plant, but I see that it is "not exceeding at any time £4,000." Does this mean that the Board can keep on borrowing sums of £4,000? I am not saying what the interpretation of that clause is, but I think it is limiting the borrowing in some way. If it is only one borrowing, then the £4,000 requires to be increased. With regard to clause 22, subsection (3), that, Sir, fits in with my remarks made a little while ago in connection with public buildings. Subsection (3) gives the Superintendent power to do certain things. "He shall at all times have free access to all theatres and other buildings within his district used for public entertainment or public concourse, in order to report to the Board whether proper precautions for the prevention of or escape from fire are being observed." What is the good of the Superintendent having that power if the Board has no control over the