

59. The point I want to get at is this: There were thirteen Boards communicated with, and the only three that have stated they are prepared to have anything to do with central control are Westland, South Canterbury, and Southland?—Yes; but take the case of Hawke's Bay. The Board there appointed a sub-committee, but it could not get a meeting and so they did not send an answer. I do not think that represents any opinion at all. It is not even negative evidence of a decided character.

60. You say in your memorandum that the Education Committee last year adopted this recommendation with regard to local control without discussion?—Yes.

61. Do you not remember that we had at least two or three days' discussion over the matter?—I said "almost without discussion." It was taken for granted by nearly every speaker. There were practically no reasons given.

62. Did you not yourself contend very vigorously for central control, and were you not opposed by nearly all the members of the Committee?—It simply amounted to an expression of opinion. Discussion involves the giving of reasons and grounds for opinions. Expression of opinion does not amount to a discussion. I am judging by my own recollection of what took place and my own recollection is very clear about it.

63. *Mr. Hardy.*] There was a great deal of talk, was there not, whether it was discussion or not?—I speak to the best of my recollection. In this paper, which is a memorandum to the Minister, I spoke to the best of my recollection and belief, and I know of nothing to lead me to say that my statement is incorrect.

64. You have had an expression of opinion from the four Boards of the districts in which the colleges would be established—Otago, North Canterbury, Wellington, and Auckland?—Yes.

65. And it is natural, you say, that these people should wish to have the control?—It is natural for people to like power.

66. They have already had control in Otago and North Canterbury?—Yes; they already have control.

67. They were able to speak with experience, I presume?—Of local control, not of departmental control.

68. They were able to speak of the control which they already had?—Yes; which they themselves had exercised.

69. And they spoke firmly because they believed that in consequence of their control in a measure it was a success?—That might be their opinion.

70. Are they not as much entitled to their opinion as you are to yours?—Yes. I was expressing my own opinion to the Minister.

71. Surely we must hold that if we are fit to be members of Boards our judgment should be of some value?—I do not dispute that at all. I have not said anything whatever to throw any reflection on the Boards. I have not said anything whatever to indicate that I believe that the members of the Boards were not entitled to their own opinions.

72. I was getting round to that. I was speaking about the members of these four large Boards?—I do not think the members of the Boards are experts in the matter of education in connection with training colleges. They are not experts in education.

73. Do they not know a little about it?—Oh yes, as popular Boards do in course of time, by doing the work of administration and doing it well; but they do not get to be experts.

74. Still, as we grow accustomed to the work, do we not get some knowledge?—Yes; it depends upon how long members of Boards have been at it, how far they have gone into the details, and how far they are in a position to see how it affects the subsequent careers of the students.

75. Do not these Boards make use of their Inspectors and are they not in this way becoming possessed of expert knowledge?—To what extent do they make use of their Inspectors for the training colleges?

76. In every instance—I can speak for North Canterbury?—Well, ask Mr. Inspector Wood and let him tell you.

77. Mr. Wood has retired from the service of the Board?—Yes; but he has been an Inspector of the North Canterbury Board for a great many years, and what was his opinion at the meeting at which you and I were present? He said it wanted total and radical reform.

78. I heard a different opinion expressed by two other Inspectors who were present?—Yes.

79. Do you not think those two other Inspectors had an equal right to express their opinion?—They did not express any opinion on that point at the meeting.

80. Yes, they did?—That it had been a success under the Board.

81. Yes?—I do not remember. I do not want you to think Mr. Hardy, that I do not think the Boards are as much entitled to their opinion as I am. I was asked to give an expression of my opinion, and I gave it.

82. *Mr. Baume.*] The difficulty was that you put it that we made our recommendation "without discussion," whereas there was a great deal of what we considered to be discussion?—Well, I am very sorry, but that is my impression, and I cannot alter it. As I say, I am anxious that the training colleges should be established under any suitable conditions whatever; but I do not know any solid reason why they should be under the Boards at all.

83. You spoke of Mr. Frank Tate just now. Did he not say that the system of decentralisation in New Zealand had worked extremely well?—Not in regard to training colleges. You will see from the Press reports that Mr. Tate was uncompromisingly and very strongly in favour of central control of the training colleges, and went so far as to prophesy failure if they were not under central control.

84. *Mr. Hardy.*] Did Mr. Tate not express one opinion when he was in the colony and another opinion after he left?—No, not on the subject of training colleges. In regard to the control of the schools he was very strongly in favour of decentralisation, but not in connection with the thing that was essentially central in its character.