

Dr. BATCHELOR (Dunedin) said his experience had been that not enough interest was taken in the elections to Charitable Aid Boards. There were many men who did not care to become members of local bodies such as County Councils, yet who would make very good members of Hospital Boards. He would vote against both the motion and the amendment, but he was prepared to support the amendment indicated by Mr. Gallaway.

Mr. CRAWFORD (Wellington) said it seemed to him that the feeling was very much against the original motion and in favour of the amendment. He submitted that the question of principle was whether the members of Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards should be elected municipally or on the parliamentary franchise.

Mr. MULVHILL (Westland) said the present system was working very well.

Mr. J. P. LUKE (Wellington), in reply, acknowledged the very kindly way in which the Conference had received the resolution. The question of the ratepayers had been imported into the discussion. In his opinion, people who were not ratepayers had just as much right to have a voice in these matters as ratepayers had. He thought it would be better to adopt the parliamentary roll in connection with these elections rather than the municipal roll.

The amendment—viz., "That this Conference is of opinion that the present mode of representation is the most equitable to all the contributing local authorities, and recommends that clause 6 of the Act of 1886 be a clause in the amending Bill"—was carried by a large majority.

Mr. MANHIRE (Christchurch) moved, "That the members of the Board shall be elected by the ratepayers for the time being entitled to elect members to a local authority within the district."

Mr. GALLAWAY (Dunedin) moved, "That the method set forth in the Bill be adopted." Neither the ratepayers nor the local bodies were properly represented under the present system.

Mr. LONDON (Dunedin) seconded the amendment. He thought the provision in the Bill was a step in the right direction. He was not in favour of extending the parliamentary franchise to the election of these Boards, but he thought there should be some alteration. He thought if the clause in the Bill were adopted it would create an interest amongst the ratepayers; and it would be the means of their having desirable men to administer hospital and charitable-aid matters.

Mr. BELLRINGER (New Plymouth) said the amendment was the most iniquitous thing he had heard. He asked the Conference to allow the amendment to go to the vote without further discussion. The present system of election had produced very good results, and he asked the Conference to support it.

Mr. STEAD (Invercargill) thought the proposed system would be a great improvement on the present system of election.

Mr. FRASER (North Otago) said he had great pleasure in supporting the amendment. He thought that if the franchise were extended as suggested in the amendment it would be a step in the right direction. It would give the people a vote who had a right to it. Another reason why he thought the Conference ought to support the amendment was that it provided for all parts of a charitable-aid district being represented on the Board. The Bill provided for the district being subdivided, and each district having one or more members. Then, as to the question of cost, that objection had been raised in the case of almost every new election proposed during the past twenty years. Although it might cost a little more money, it would probably be money very well spent.

Mr. RHODES (Coromandel) did not favour the amendment now proposed. He thought another amendment going a little further than the motion would meet the position. The principle was whether every contributor should have some say in the election of the Board or not.

Mr. J. G. WILSON said that if the election day had happened to be wet, very few people would vote in the country districts. The centres of population would be represented much too largely on the Board.

Mr. Gallaway's amendment—viz., "That the members of the Board shall be elected by those who are entitled to elect members to a local authority within the district"—was negatived by fifty-two votes to fifteen.

Mr. RHODES (Coromandel) moved, and Mr. O'BRIEN (Mercury Bay) seconded, "That the contributory local authorities and subscribers elect the representatives to the Board in proportion to the amount contributed, the representatives to be elected under similar conditions to those which govern the election of members of Boards of Education."

The resolution was negatived.

Mr. Bellringer's motion—viz., "That the Conference is of opinion that the present mode of representation is the most equitable to all contributing authorities, and recommends that clause 6 of the amended Act of 1886 be a clause in the amending Bill"—was agreed to on the voices.

The Conference then adjourned.

## SECOND DAY (WEDNESDAY, 10th JUNE, 1908).

### BASIS OF REPRESENTATION.

The CHAIRMAN said that by the carrying of Mr. Bellringer's resolution the previous day it had been agreed that representation should be based on the contributions from local authorities and the population, which was the present system exactly. This basis had been worked out actuarially, and had apparently given satisfaction for the past twenty-three years. An apportionment was made between the contributions of the local authorities and the population; the mean was taken between the two, and the basis assessed accordingly. It was a difficult problem to arrive at a perfectly satisfactory basis, and his recommendation to the Conference was that they should adhere to the present basis.