

from among themselves or from outside—in addition—separate committees to manage the separate institutions under them. He thought a scheme such as that if adopted would meet the whole difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. C. M. LUKE said, if the Conference required an argument in favour of separate institutions, he had only to point to the management of the Wellington Hospital, the success of which was proverbial. He did support the proposition for the amalgamation of benevolent aid and hospital administration, because he knew from experience that each body was inclined to shirk its responsibilities towards the suffering poor who were turned over from one institution to the other and back again; but with regard to the Wellington Hospital, if administered by a Board which had many other interests, such an institution would be liable to suffer. The management of such institutions as the Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin Hospitals should be largely in the hands of the men whose time was not occupied with multifarious other local-government and other duties.

Mr. BOLTON (Wellington) said, as a member of the Wellington Hospital Trustees and of the Benevolent Trustees as well, he knew something of the administration of both institutions. He was quite in accord with the principle embodied in the Bill, which provided for a central Board composed of the chairmen of the various committees. The committees would report through their chairmen to the main Board. By this means some direct control over the various institutions would be vested in the central Board. The principle, he thought, was admirable, though the details might want adjusting. As to the question of whether one body should control both hospital and charitable aid, he was somewhat in a difficulty. For his part, he thought five men on a committee would have too much to do to look after both hospital and charitable aid, and he thought the best solution would be for one central Board to have control of the expenditure, and that there should be separate committees dealing with hospital and charitable aid in detail.

Mr. GALLAWAY (Dunedin) said, so far as he had heard, no reflection whatever was cast upon the work of the separate institutions, though he and others considered that better work might be done under central Boards. The fact that they had been accustomed to go on working in one groove was no argument that these institutions could not be more effectively administered under a different system. Having affirmed the principle the previous day that hospital and charitable matters should be administered by one Board, it was only logical, he thought, to assent that separate institutions had had their day.

Mr. TALBOYS (Dunedin) said he had been connected with the Dunedin Benevolent Institution for the last eight years, and he had come to the conclusion that better work could be done by a central Board. There had been great trouble between the Hospital and Benevolent Institution as to which should take certain classes of cases, and the Benevolent Institution was simply the dumping-ground for cases which the Hospital refused to take. If the principle of a central Board were affirmed, that Board could appoint one committee from its number to act as a hospital committee and another to act as a benevolent committee. He agreed that in the past the separate institutions had done good work.

Mr. TAPLEY (Dunedin) believed that the majority of those connected with the separate institutions in Dunedin would concur in the opinions expressed by Mr. Gallaway and Mr. Talboys. He was confident that under a central Board the administration would not only be more smooth, but more economical.

Mr. SCANTLEBURY (Reefton) spoke of the good work done by the Reefton ladies' society, which did not come upon the rates at all, but which was maintained by voluntary contributions with the Government subsidy.

The CHAIRMAN said that society would still maintain its existence as a separate institution.

Mr. SCANTLEBURY would be sorry to see separate institutions abolished in the country districts. On the West Coast there was a central Board at Greymouth, and how could a Board like that be expected to manage an institution a hundred miles away as well and as economically as a separate body constituted locally.

Mr. EVANS (Wellington Benevolent Trustees) submitted that if all the separate institutions in the Second Schedule of the Bill (those not assisted out of rates) were left out of consideration, the Conference was in favour of abolishing the separate control of the others. He felt certain that if the separate institutions already existing were abolished, and brought into more direct relation with the Charitable Aid Boards, it would be alike in the interests of economy and efficiency. He referred, of course, only to separate institutions as distinct from those in the Second Schedule of the Bill.

Mr. KNIGHT (Auckland) thought that if the Conference simply affirmed the principle of doing away with separate institutions they would have done good work. Although there was a multiplicity of institutions in Auckland, the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board as one body administered the whole of them. For example, they had a Charitable Aid Committee, a Costley Home Committee, and an Alexandra Home Committee. Each of these committees reported once a fortnight to the Board, and their reports were indorsed or otherwise as the case might be. Administration under that system had proved exceedingly simple.

Mr. POWER (Waihi) appeared as an advocate for the retention of separate institutions. After listening to the remarks of many of the speakers that day he could quite understand that in the larger centres it was desirable to have centralisation of control, but so far as the country districts were concerned he held that the proposals contained in the Bill now before them were not at all workable. In the district he represented they had only one contributing body, that was the Waihi Borough Council. The amount contributed to the Hospital was about £1,800. This Bill would take the control of this institution completely out of the hands of the present Board and remove it to a greater distance. The management of the central body would then extend over 130 miles. What did the people at the south end of the district know about the distribution of charitable aid,