

for instance, in the north? If this proposal was to be carried he hoped a proviso would be inserted to the effect that it should apply to the cities only.

Mr. MOORE (Wellington) was against the continuance of dual control in the large cities, and he felt sure the Hon. Mr. Luke would agree with him if he were a member of the District Board. At the present time, although the District Board were finding the whole of the money, less the amount contributed by the Government, they had no voice whatever in the constitution of the committee or Board of Trustees that had the expenditure of that money. That surely was an anomaly that should not be permitted to continue, and he thought the Government would fail in its duty if it did not put an end to it. He hoped that when the vote was taken on this matter the votes would be analysed, and when it was found that members of the Conference had voted for a continuance of the present state of things simply because they felt their own position might be jeopardized a note would be made of it for the information of the Minister.

Mr. RHODES (Coromandel) said that for about thirty years the Coromandel Hospital was controlled by the District Board, with the result that it was a considerable tax on the local body. Two years ago, however, it was incorporated as a separate institution, the result being that the tax on the ratepayers was reduced by more than one-half, and from present indications, if they continued as they were going now, in a very few years it would be entirely self-supporting. If, then, this Bill were passed as it stood, they would have no opportunity of coming in as one of the institutions that were not affected. But he contended that practically all the separate institutions were affected by this Bill, because they were mostly in districts where the population was continually changing and it might become necessary for them at any time to make a call on the rates, and their right to manage their own affairs would then be taken away from them.

Mr. WEBB agreed to the words of Mr. Milligan's amendment being added to his motion. The motion would now read, "That the present system of separate institutions as now in force be approved and continued in cases in which the majority of contributing authorities desire it."

Mr. MORRISON thought it would be better to put a clause in the Act giving power to the large cities to abolish separate institutions if they so desired.

Mr. LONDON (Wellington Hospital Trustees) was in favour of the motion now before the meeting. He pointed out that the Wellington Trustees were more representative of the local bodies and of the contributors than was the District Board itself. There were seven representatives of the boroughs on the Hospital Trustees, while there were not more than five or six on the District Board. The same applied to the Benevolent Institution, and it was a very good thing, as it tended to foster the spirit of benevolence in the district. The work of one of these institutions was as much as any one man could attend to satisfactorily, and if the District Boards were saddled with further duties he believed the efficiency of administration would suffer.

Mr. CHAYTOR said the size of the districts was largely involved in this question. It was desirable that there should be no overlapping of authority. The country people were strongly opposed to placing the outlying hospitals under the complete control of a central Board.

Mr. EATON (Masterton) said this was a most important matter to his district. If there was to be centralisation of authority it was impossible that the administration could be as successful as it had been in the past. The Board represented Pahiatua, Carterton, and Masterton, and he believed the taking-away of local control would be a great misfortune to the hospitals. He would oppose the motion.

Mr. PAYLING (Christchurch) said this question of separate institutions did not affect his district so far as hospitals were concerned. The people there were quite satisfied to have the main hospital under the control of the District Board, though he quite recognised the country people would fight hard against the abolition of separate institutions. It was said the Christchurch people were well satisfied with the management of the Samaritan Home, but he contended that it could be quite as well managed by the Benevolent Institution, and probably better. At present it was a harbour for those who misconducted themselves. Those people should be sent to some place where they would have to work and pay for their keep. If such institutions were under the control of the State they could be carried on at far less expense. Well-meaning people went about collecting money on which they could claim the Government subsidy in order to keep these institutions open, but he felt sure the work could be very much better done under a central authority and at less cost.

Mr. BAGNALL (Auckland) said that in Auckland the Hospital, the charitable aid and benevolent institution, and the Old Men's Home were all run by the one institution, while in Wellington it appeared there were four or five separate institutions. He agreed with the last speaker that a multiplication of institutions meant additional expense. He also agreed that the easier they made it for people to get into such institutions as the Samaritan Home the greater the number they would have in them, and the more difficult they made it the more likely would the people be to help themselves. In Auckland, if a case came before the Board they made arrangements with one of the institutions under its control until the case was done with. If a case became chronic the Board sent it to the Home, because it could be looked after at less expense, and thus in the management there was no friction. He would support the motion, although it seemed to convey the idea that where the local bodies contribute rates the representatives of those local bodies would be the controlling body, which he did not think was quite what was intended.

Mr. TALBOT (South Canterbury) thought that after hearing the discussion the Conference must come to the conclusion that some alteration was necessary. The placing of separate institutions under a different system was, he considered, one of the most important of the proposals of the Government. He would give his vote in favour of the amendment, which meant that those bodies which were able to find the money would have control over their respective institutions.

Mr. BAIN (Invercargill) said the difficulty his district was placed in with regard to the vote about to be taken was that he represented more than one institution. If the vote was to be a fair one each institution should have a vote.