

The CHAIRMAN said due regard would be paid to the significance of each vote recorded. From the remarks which had fallen from some of the speakers it would appear that in his opening address he had cast some reflection upon the Trustees who controlled the various separate institutions, and had implied that they had not in the past administered their institutions with due regard to economy. The remarks he made were not directed at the institutions, but at the system. He maintained that the system obtaining at present under which they had one body of men providing the money and another body of men spending it was altogether wrong in principle. He did not intend to reflect in any way upon the excellent administration of the Trustees of those institutions throughout the Dominion. Not one speaker had recognised that the original intention in establishing separate institutions had failed. When Sir Julius Vogel introduced his Bill in 1885 he believed that in due time all the separate institutions would be independent of any support from the local authorities and would with the Government subsidy be self-supporting. At the present time only eleven institutions in the Dominion were in that position, while there were forty-one which derived their money from the rates. That, he thought, was a proof that the separate-institution system had been a failure.

Mr. WEBB (Northern Wairoa) wished to say, in reply, that almost every speaker throughout the discussion had borne testimony to the splendid work done by the separate institutions throughout the Dominion. The Chairman himself had admitted that they were well managed. Even if an institution had to go to the Boards and ask for a little money, was that an argument that the Board should have sole control of that institution when it was being thoroughly well managed? The North of Auckland Board did not want to wipe out the Wairoa institution simply because they claimed from the Board £246 in support of that institution. They should take care that nothing was done to discourage the good work that was being done by the people who had banded themselves together for such an object, even though they had been assisted by the rates to some extent.

On the question of the amendment—viz., "That this Conference affirms the principle that the Boards which have charge of charitable aid should have control of the expenditure"—the voting was as follows: Ayes, 29; noes, 43; majority against, 14. Amendment negatived.

The motion, "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," was then put and carried on the voices.

#### GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES.

Mr. BELLINGER (Taranaki) moved, "That this Conference protests against any reduction of the Government subsidies to hospital and charitable aid."

Mr. QUINN (Hawera) seconded the motion.

Mr. TAPPER (Otago) moved as an amendment, "That the whole cost of hospital and charitable administration should be borne by the Consolidated Fund." In support of this proposal he said that a man, after spending the best years of his life in the South, might leave for a warmer climate. He might go to Auckland, and if he needed hospital treatment or charitable aid in his old age he would under the present system come upon the Auckland ratepayers. If there was one charge that should be made against the Consolidated Fund it was the ordinary upkeep of benevolent institutions.

Mr. PAYLING (Christchurch) seconded the motion *pro forma*. There was a good deal to be said both for and against the amendment proposed by Mr. Tapper, and he was afraid a discussion on the subject would only be a waste of time. It would be better to come to a decision on the question of the reduction of subsidies.

Mr. MARX (Hawera) said, though much might be urged in favour of the amendment, he thought on the whole if they continued to receive the present subsidy it would be a fair thing. He regarded the subsidy as a right. The little more than half they received by way of subsidy provided for the national part of the institution. That was to say, it made provision for those people from whom they derived no benefit, and who required treatment or care in their time of affliction. He could not see his way to support the amendment.

Mr. BAGNALL (Auckland) did not think the Government could seriously ask that the subsidies be reduced. He would like to hear what the Chairman had to say in support of it before entering upon a discussion of the question. So far as the amendment was concerned, he felt that while the Boards claimed the right to control the expenditure they could hardly go to the length of saying that the Government ought to find all the money.

The CHAIRMAN at this stage asked that the discussion of this question might be postponed, as after the luncheon adjournment he hoped to be in a position to make a statement on the subject.

After the luncheon adjournment, the CHAIRMAN said he would ask the leave of the Conference to postpone the discussion on the question of subsidies until he had some authoritative statement from the Minister as to the proposals which he (the Chairman) had put before the Conference. He wanted particularly to postpone the discussion, because he could not but think that the proposal suggested might meet in some measure with the approval of the Conference. He hoped to be able to make the statement that afternoon.

The discussion on the question of subsidies was postponed.

#### ELECTION OF COMMITTEES.

The CHAIRMAN said they would now take the question of the election of committees. Personally he thought he could say, without being in any sense disloyal to any one connected with his Department, he did not at all approve of the proposals in the Bill in regard to the election of committees. He shared the opinion with a good many members of the Conference that an election in the way proposed would result in a good deal of friction. He maintained most emphatically that the com-