

98. Naturally the local bodies and the members of the Board will be against it?—Yes.

99. The members of the Boards do not like being wiped out?—I fancy it would be a good thing if the Board were wiped out from my own personal point of view. I should have more time of my own.

100. Have you any high schools?—There is one high school.

101. Is there any reason why they should not be controlled by the Education Board?—No.

102. Would you favour them being controlled by the Board of Education?—Yes.

ROBERT MASTERS examined. (No. 19.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A member of the Taranaki Education Board.

2. Do you wish to make a statement to the Committee?—Yes. Section 14: "Where there is no 'urban' area in an education district the number of members of the Board should be nine." If the education districts proposed in the Bill were retained, and clause 14 were not amended on the lines suggested, there would be only eight members in the Hawke's Bay District as against ten in Egmont, seeing that in Egmont there will be two urban districts—viz., one at Wanganui and another at Palmerston North—whilst in Hawke's Bay there will be only one—viz., at Napier. I would point out that, although there might not be any urban areas in an education district on account of the large area a district might cover, it would be more necessary to have three members to a ward than a district that might have two or more urban areas. To make the point clear I will make a comparison of the wards represented by myself on the Taranaki Education Board and, say, Wanganui under the present Education Bill as an urban area. My district takes in from Opunake on the west to Eltham Borough boundary on the south, out to Ohura on the east, and to Inglewood on the north. For this district under the Bill there would be two members, and Wanganui as an urban area would be entitled to the same number. It would be obvious that in such a scattered district there is more necessity for three members than for two for the urban area of Wanganui. Section 15: If the foregoing amendment were made in clause 14 consequential amendments would require to be made in this section. Section 34: The following new subsection is suggested by my Board: "The Board may in every financial year out of its General Fund, or account expend for purposes not authorized by any Act or law for the time being in force any sum or sums not amounting in the whole to more than one per centum of the grant mentioned: Provided that if one per centum of such grant does not in any financial year amount to fifteen pounds the Board may in that year expend the sum of fifteen pounds for such purposes aforesaid." Clause 121 of the Public Revenues Act, 1910, makes provision for a limited amount of unauthorized expenditure in the case of County Councils, Borough Councils, Town Boards, &c., and it seems reasonable that Education Boards should be placed in a similar position. The stricter the Audit Department is the more necessary is it to allow the Board a reasonable amount of latitude in expenditure not clearly defined by the Act and yet not opposed to the spirit of it. To quote an instance of the unfair position in which Education Boards are placed: Last year a member of the Taranaki Board was appointed by resolution to attend a conference of Education Boards in Wellington, which was, of course, to further the interests of education in the Dominion, and during his stay in Wellington he interviewed the Education Department and the Minister of Education in connection with matters of interest to the Board; yet the Audit Department disallowed the expenses for that visit, and each member of the Board was sued and has to pay the whole of the expenses of the visit. My Board is of the opinion that in such a case as this the expenses should be paid by the Board, and as at present there is no fund out of which it can be paid a clause should be put in the present Bill as suggested, and that Education Boards should be put on at least an equal footing with other local bodies. Section 35, School Libraries: Apparently subsidies would be paid twice on the same donation, once by the Department and once by the Board. This can hardly be intended. Section 41: This section does not seem to agree with section 50. Section 51, subsection (3): "Three" should be substituted for "five" in line 1. If "five" is retained in section 51 it may entail that children, even only five years old, may have to walk considerably over three miles to school. Take a case in the Taranaki District—Urenui and Waihi Schools, both on the same main road, about five miles apart. Children living, say, two miles up the side road that branches off from this main road about midway between the two schools may be required to walk close on five miles to either school. Section 51, subsections (4) and (5): These subsections should be struck out as being altogether too arbitrary and placing too much power in the hands of the Minister. Section 51, subsection (6): All words after "0" should be struck out. According to subsection (1) of the Sixth Schedule of the Bill a teacher in a Grade 0 school shall be paid £6 per annum for every pupil in yearly average attendance. It is recommended that £12 be substituted for £6. This would bring the payments of teachers in schools of Grade 0 and Grade I more in harmony than at present. It might be pointed out that teachers in Grade 0 schools have to put up with many disadvantages. £12 per unit would only mean a maximum for Grade 0 of £96, whereas an average of one or more would place the school in Grade I, and the teacher would then be entitled to a maximum salary of £100 and £20 house allowance, which amounts to over £13 per pupil. Most of the Grade 0 schools in the Taranaki District are in the backblocks, and if it is absolutely necessary to establish a school it does not seem reasonable to require struggling settlers to provide part of the teacher's salary. All that could be reasonably expected is that they should provide (as they generally do now) a room or building. Part VIII, Technical Education: Provision should be made for the salaries of directors of technical classes and schools being paid on a fixed scale in a similar manner to the teachers in primary schools. Where it is possible to establish sufficiently large classes, payment of salaries of