

examination, and inspection required by the Department. Third Schedule, paragraph 9 (Board elections): The present delay of fifteen days before voting-papers are opened could be obviated by slightly extending the time for voting, and requiring papers to be returned by a fixed day. Fourth Schedule, paragraph 9 (School Committee elections): The second chance for election should be deleted on the score of trouble and expense and of delay in preparing rolls for the Board election. In the case of no other public body is a second opportunity for election given. Verbal nominations at householders' meetings should be continued, and voting-papers should not be required to contain the names of the candidates. Second Schedule (district boundaries): The new Southland District should include the schools near the Waipahi-Edievale Railway, the Blue Mountains or the Clutha River being made the boundary. This district can be reached much more easily from Invercargill than from Dunedin. Twelfth Schedule (Inspectors' salaries): The fourth class of Assistant Inspectors should be cut out, and the minimum raised to £500. The Southland Board enters its protest against the numerous and insidious ways in which its powers and duties are encroached upon and curtailed by the proposals in the Bill, and also against the corresponding increase of the powers of the central authority, which may in time become thoroughly autocratic and oppressive. These proposals are undemocratic and rob the public of their right to control their own affairs. This will lead to a great reduction in the local interest in education, which is one of the best features of our New Zealand system. The following are a few examples of these proposals which tend to destroy the powers of Boards and reduce their status to that of glorified School Committees: (1) The appointment of Inspectors is taken away; (2) the power to establish new schools is curtailed (51); (3) the power to spend money is limited by regulations (34); (4) the power to transfer teachers is restricted (67); (5) the transfer of funds is limited (31); (6) the Minister may compel Boards to close schools and to pay for conveyance (51 (4)); (7) the power to establish scholarships and district high schools is deleted (30); (8) the formation of the Councils will undermine the very foundation of the Boards' powers in every direction.

3. *Mr. Hogben.*] With regard to clause 34 of the Bill, you are aware that any regulations that could be drawn would have to be in accordance with the appropriations of Parliament?—Yes.

4. And practically the Board is now controlled by those appropriations, is it not?—Yes.

5. Could the regulations go outside those appropriations—could they alter those appropriations?—Why does it become necessary?

6. Are you aware that now differences of opinion arise from time to time because the Auditor-General has taken a view of the regulations that neither the Board nor the Department has taken, so that the Board is hampered, not understanding the appropriations of Parliament: so that this really helps the Boards?—I am aware that certain payments have been made which have been tagged by the Audit Department.

7. And that the Department has taken the same view as the Board, and not that of the Audit Department?—Your contention is that this extends and does not limit the powers of the Boards. It limits the power of the Board in this: it does not allow the Board to construe matters as it thinks fit, but it must be in accordance with the Department's opinion. It does limit the Board's power to the extent that it is not left to the Board to interpret the Act and to expend the money in such direction as it chooses within the provisions of the law. You want to take away the power the Board has now got, and to give the power to the central authority to make regulations and say, "You must expend the money in accordance with this."

8. Money could not be expended except in accordance with the appropriations of Parliament?—That is so.

9. Then the regulations must allow the Boards liberty to the same extent as the appropriations of Parliament do?—Yes.

10. Then the only thing is to make the matter clear as between the Audit Department and the Board. That is the intention. And the Audit Department wants to know too?—The words in the present Act, "as they think fit," have been deleted and been replaced by "as by regulation prescribed."

11. Clause 45 provides that a Committee shall cease to exist if for a period of three months it fails to hold a meeting. What do you mean by a Committee failing to carry out its duties?—We had a case in which this occurred: A Committee to whom we paid the schedule rate for incidental expenses that the Board had adopted considered that that amount was not sufficient, and as a protest, after requesting us to increase it, declined to carry out the duties appertaining to their position. They also declined to resign, but they closed the school. The Board authorized the teacher to reopen the school, and instructed the teacher to carry out the duties of the Committee in the meantime, in so far as providing the necessary fuel, charring, sanitary arrangements, and so on were concerned, and to generally maintain the school as if the Committee was in full control. The Board paid for these services out of the grant that would have been payable to the Committee. What we want to get at is, in the event of a Committee being provided with the payments prescribed and it refuses to conduct the affairs of the school, that the Board should resume control of that school, and that the Committee should automatically go out of existence.

12. Would it not be rather a serious thing to abolish a Committee unless the act by which it refuses to go on with its work was very clear and definite?—Yes. But this is an absolute case I am giving you.

13. Can you suggest any definite acts that should lead to the abolition of a Committee?—Its refusal to carry out the duties prescribed for it, conditional on its being provided with the funds prescribed by Act.

14. That is under subclause (2) of clause 47?—Yes. This Committee declined to do any of those things. We do not want to interfere with the rights of Committees at all, but to have the right to meet abnormal cases.