

18. *Mr. McCallum.*] Is this a very big matter of all Boards providing Inspectors of sufficient capacity to examine high schools—would there be any great saving in it?—No, I do not think there would be under the present arrangement.

19. Will there be any substantial gain from an educational standpoint?—Economically I do not think there would be very much difference, but educationally I think each Board could manage the institutions in its district.

20. But you would not suggest that the Inspector of Marlborough should be allowed to inspect the secondary school there?—But we are assuming that Marlborough is likely to be obliterated.

21. Well, take Nelson, with Marlborough included?—Yes, I think a large Board like that could arrange it.

22. It would be a matter of chance if they had the Inspectors?—Yes, under present arrangements.

23. Not every Inspector could?—No.

24. You are aware, too, that the principals of our high schools resent very much being inspected by Board Inspectors?—Yes, but in this request of the Board you have to look at future arrangements. If this is done we can make an adjustment afterwards. If this position were arrived at then the Inspector who was appointed would be able to do it. \*

25. *Mr. Sidey.*] Are you in favour of Education Boards taking over the control of secondary schools altogether?—Yes, I am in favour of that. I would like to say that my own opinion is that the Boards could do it, but at the same time I think, without centralizing the Inspectors, the Department should have a little control, and, say, by consultation with the Boards have some say in the appointment. That would meet the adverse views held at the present time. The Department is trying to get the Boards to work more in touch with themselves. There I think the Department is right, but the method of doing it means that you are taking so much away from the Boards. I should like to support Mr. Stewart in what he said, and I feel certain that if I as Senior Inspector came into the Board meeting as an officer of the Department that relationship between the Board and myself would not be the same. I have had over twenty years' experience as an Inspector, and I attend the Board meetings. I know the members would not listen so much to my advice if I were an officer under any Department as if I were an officer of the Board. I think also that the Department's view is fairly right, too. The Department should be a little more in touch with the work of Inspectors in our district than they are at present. I believe that can be done without centralizing the Inspectors. If the Department had a say in the appointment by means of consultation, and all the Inspectors' reports were forwarded straight to the Department without centralizing the Inspectors, that would give the Board an interest in the appointment which would meet the case. That is my own opinion.

#### WILLIAM ALLEN examined. (No. 34.)

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

2. Have you anything to say to the Committee in regard to the Education Bill?—Yes. Clause 2 of our statement reads, "While the Bill possesses many excellent features it is not desirable to pass, without allowing more time for careful and critical examination, a measure which proposes changes so many and so vital, and therefore it should not proceed this session." I should like to emphasize that particular clause. This Bill has come upon us as rather a surprise, although we have been in a way expecting it. It has given us very little time for consideration, and as there are such vital points I do not think it should be proceeded with this session, and I am voicing very largely the opinion of our Board. To be a valuable Bill it ought to be popular, and the people ought to have some idea of what is going to be done. As it is the Committees have had nothing to say yet in regard to the various proposals, and without the Committees you are going to strike a very serious blow at education in New Zealand.

3. *Mr. Sidey.*] What have you to say in regard to that portion of the Bill dealing with increases in salaries?—I have nothing to say in regard to that. I approve of all you have done in the way of helping the teachers.

4. You only refer to the general alterations in the method of government?—Yes.

5. *Mr. McCallum.*] How many of the nine members of your Board take an intelligent interest in the working of the Education Act in Wellington?—100 per cent. The whole of them are qualified to administer the affairs, even myself.

6. *The Chairman.*] Do you not think that those interested in educational matters have already had before them the report of the Education Commission of 1912 and the report of the Education Committee of the House of last session, and could see the drift of the educational tendency?—I have no doubt a very large number have—those who are in official touch with the Department—but they are only a very small proportion of the people.

7. I say "those interested in educational matters": did they not have an opportunity of seeing the drift of proposed legislation?—Only those people to whom I refer—those who are in official touch with the Department, such as the School Committees, Education Boards, &c. The general public had no knowledge of it to speak of.

8. Does the general public take an intelligent interest in this matter?—Had you been here at the last election of School Committees and been at the Willis Street schoolroom, where there were about three hundred and fifty to four hundred householders at the election, you would have been convinced that the people do take an interest in such matters. That meeting lasted till about a quarter past 12 o'clock.

9. *Mr. McCallum.*] Perhaps they were fighting about some local matter?—No.

10. *The Chairman.*] I merely wanted to know whether you think that those who are interested in the general education question have not had ample opportunity for finding out the drift in the past?—I do not think they have.