

44. Is it not a parochial feeling only?—No, I do not think so. I do not approach it from that point of view. I approach it from the point of view of the interests of education generally.

45. Do you say you would not be just as well served by an office in Timaru, a Clerk there, and your two or three delegates representing the nine members going up to Christchurch once a month?—I have already given my opinion on that matter.

46. *The Chairman.*] Which are your counties?—Geraldine, Levels, Mackenzie, and Waimate.

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CHARLES SMITH HOWARD examined (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I have been a member of the Timaru Education Board for the last nine years.

2. Will you please make your statement to the Committee?—I feel that there is very little for me to say. Mr. Hamilton has covered very effectively practically the whole of the points we desired to bring forward. On behalf of the Board, and I think I might say on behalf of the whole of the district.—at all events, the larger Committees, and I believe the majority of the smaller Committees—I desire to express our satisfaction with the Bill which has been introduced. As you are aware, I have been a teacher for thirty-five years, and for nine years I have been a member of the Board. I know something about the different Acts that have been passed, and I consider the present Bill is a very fine one indeed. Our hope is that, with the exception of one or two things, it may become law. We desire that the proposal in the Bill with regard to dividing the Boards or districts will not be carried out. I might say that there seems to be general satisfaction with regard to the betterment of the secondary school-teachers. One disappointment in connection with the Bill is that you still continue to pay salaries according to the average attendance, and it is hoped that you may see your way to alter that. One matter that Mr. Hamilton omitted to mention was the fact that we have endeavoured to do a great deal of work as a Board for the schools. We have a staff of workmen, we have shops and machinery, and we make all our own desks, forms, and cupboards. We build our own houses and schools, and we do the painting and repairs to the schools generally throughout the whole district. During the last three years every school and schoolhouse in the district has been thoroughly overhauled and put in good repair. We do not claim that it is particularly a money-saving business, although it does not cost any more, but the character of the work done is undoubtedly very much superior to that which we have been accustomed to get under the old system of tendering. If we joined with North Canterbury, we do not know what will happen to this part of our work, and it is altogether too important to be done away with. It should be remembered that originally South Canterbury was a part of North Canterbury, and it was found very difficult to work South Canterbury from North Canterbury. There was a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed, and the result was that there was a subdivision of the district.

3. *Mr. McCallum.*] How long ago was that?—Something over thirty years ago. It seems to those in the Timaru District and the South Canterbury District that if this proposal is tried for a while it will eventually have to be altered again. I was a little surprised to hear the Minister of Education say that economy was not to enter into the business. We understood the larger Boards were supposed to be able to exercise considerable economy in addition to the fact that it would give the teachers a larger area over which to look for promotions. Out of the ten posts we have under our Board, six have been filled by outsiders, which shows that the local teachers have not always been appointed, but the best men that we could get. As an old teacher I cannot see where it is going to be such a great advantage to the teachers in the way of promotions. It seems to me and to the members of the Board that that is a difficulty that might be overcome in some other direction. There is one other respect in which we do stand alone, and that is in the matter referred to by Mr. Hamilton—that we know each school personally. I might say that in June last the members of the Board travelled many miles and visited thirteen schools in the district.

4. *Mr. Malcolm.*] At whose expense?—At the expense of the Board, and the auditor approved of the payment. Everywhere we went we were met by the Committees, who expressed the greatest satisfaction that we had made it our business to come and see the schools and see what was required.

5. *Mr. McCallum.*] I suppose they all wanted money expended at their schools?—Yes, but they did not all get what they wanted after we saw what was required to be done. We had no hesitation in saying in some cases that they did not require it.

6. *The Chairman.*] Supposing you were under Canterbury, would it not be possible to keep your working staff together and work it from Timaru under the Canterbury Board?—I do not think it would be possible. I do not see that it would be worked cheaper or more efficiently.

7. But to keep it there and work it?—It would be very necessary to keep it there, but I cannot see that it would be possible to work it as well from Canterbury.

8. Was not the difficulty of communication in the old days the reason of the separation of the district—you not only had no railways but no bridges whatever?—No. There was a railway through to Invercargill about thirty-five years ago.

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JAMES GIBSON GOW examined. (No. 8.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am Chief Inspector for the South Canterbury Education Board.

2. Will you make your statement to the Committee?—Yes. The evidence I had proposed to give to the Committee has been pretty well covered by the previous witnesses, but I desire to