

Mr. GALLAWAY (Dunedin) thought one of the objects of the motion was to have a man on the Board who could tell the members of the Board when they wanted expert advice. Members of the Conference must not overlook this point: that a representative of the honorary staff, being a member of the Board, would share responsibility with other members of the Board in the resolutions they came to. He hoped the resolution of Dr. Batchelor would be carried by a large majority.

Mr. LOUDON (Dunedin) said he would support the motion. If the resolution were adopted the Boards would have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Mr. KNIGHT (Auckland) said that the Auckland Hospital Board at present obtained the advice of the honorary staff on all matters in regard to which they required their advice. They now had all the benefits that could be obtained under Dr. Batchelor's proposition.

Dr. BATCHELOR (Dunedin) said he had not heard one solid argument against the proposition he had made. An honorary staff would be careful whom they sent as their representative to the Board. Doctors did not like to be misunderstood, and they did not like to be criticized and their best motives sometimes brought to naught because they were really not understood. He could give instances of most extraordinary mistakes that had been made by Boards in connection with hospital matters that could have been avoided if the Board had had the advantage of the advice of a representative of the medical staff. He also knew of great waste and useless expenditure that would have been avoided if a medical man had been a member of the Board. The suggestion that the honorary staffs should be elected by the members of the profession in the large centres was a valuable one, and he commended it strongly to the consideration of the Conference.

The CHAIRMAN said that before putting the motion he would like to state that he sympathized with Dr. Batchelor's suggestion. Speaking generally he was not in favour of honorary staffs, especially in the smaller hospitals; but in the larger centres he thought honorary staffs were absolutely essential, and he thought especially that the honorary staff should be represented on the Dunedin Board of Control, as it was the only Medical School in the Dominion. It was most essential from that point of view that the very best medical opinion should be available to the Trustees of the Dunedin Hospital. He congratulated the Trustees of the Dunedin Hospital, and appreciated their recognition of the very valuable services they had received at the hands of Dr. Batchelor since he had been a member of the Board. He was also glad to hear Mr. Bagnall pay a special tribute to Dr. Robertson for his very valuable services to the Auckland Hospital. He thought the suggestion that the honorary staff should be elected by the members of the profession in the large centres was most valuable—they would in that way get the very best men; and he commended the suggestions very strongly to the consideration of the Conference.

The resolution was carried by 27 votes to 16.

Subsidies.

The CHAIRMAN was sorry to say he had not anything definite to tell the Conference on the subject of subsidies. He had been hoping for the last two or three days to be able to make some authoritative statement on the question. He might say frankly what he hoped to accomplish, and that was a reduction absolutely of any subsidy on outdoor relief. As he had said before, speaking generally he did not see that there was any need to make any reduction in the subsidies to hospitals. For the most part they were well administered. There was in respect to them very little suggestion of undue extravagance. The same could be said of charitable institutions, except that he thought that some of them were providing appliances and comforts which were rather in excess of what was absolutely required for their inmates. As regarded outdoor relief, and our institutions for the reception of charitable-aid inmates, we were putting them in a better position in regard to the comforts of life than the struggling labourer who managed to keep off the rates. The struggling man assisted to keep these people in better circumstances and in better conditions of life than those in which he and his family lived. As he had said before, he wished he had more eloquence to denounce the system of outdoor relief—the indiscriminate way in which outdoor relief was being given. In order to emphasize his point, he would read an extract from Aschrotis' review of the English poor-law system. Dr. Aschrotis was a Judge in the German Court who made it a special study of this subject, and he had written a review of the English system, for which he had, take it all round, a very great admiration. He said, "The fundamental principle with respect to the legal relief of the poor is that the condition of the pauper ought to be on the whole less eligible than that of the independent labourer. The equity and expediency of this principle are equally obvious. Unless the condition of the pauper is on the whole less eligible than that of the independent labourer, the law destroys the strongest motives to good conduct, steady industry, providence, and frugality among the labouring-classes, and induces persons, by idleness or imposture, to throw themselves upon the poor-rates for support; but if the independent labourer sees that a recurrence to the poor-rates will, while it protects him against destitution, place him in a less eligible position than that which he can attain by his own industry, he is left to the undisturbed influence of all those motives which prompt mankind to exertion, forethought, and self-denial. On the other hand, the pauper has no just ground for complaint if, at the same time that his physical wants are amply provided for, his condition should be less eligible than that of the poorest class of those who contribute to his support." Moreover, "The function of the Guardians is to relieve destitution actually existing, and not to expend the money of the ratepayers in preventing a person from becoming destitute—that is to say, they can only expend the poor-rates in supplying the destitute persons with actual necessaries." He felt that they had a great deal to learn from that. Could it be said that the inmates of some of our Homes and the position of some of those persons who were receiving outdoor relief was better than that of their struggling neighbours? He felt perfectly certain that no substantial reduction could be made in the cost of outdoor relief until the Government subsidy was withheld; and it was in that direction he would move as long as he held his present position.