

PROVINCE OF OTAGO.

The Roads Ordinance, 1865.**The Roads Ordinance, 1865, Extension and Amendment Ordinance, 1866.**

By these Ordinances, the Superintendent and his Executive constitute a General Road Board, entrusted with the management, direction, and control of all public roads within the Province; also, with the care and direction of the expenditure of all rates and funds raised, collected, or appropriated for the purposes of the Ordinance; and also with control over all the local boards constituted under the Ordinance, and over the officers of these boards.

General Road Boards to classify roads into main, main district, and district roads: classification may be altered.

In month of June in each year board of five members to be elected by ratepayers; state of vote determined by a show of hands; declaration of chairman final, unless a poll is demanded, in which case ratepayers to vote according to scale in respect to property:—

Not exceeding the nett annual value of £50	...	...	...	1 vote.
Exceeding £50 not exceeding £100	...	...	...	2 votes.
Exceeding £100 not exceeding £150	...	...	...	3 "
Exceeding £150 not exceeding £200	...	...	...	4 "
Exceeding £200	...	...	...	5 "

One yearly rate may be levied, in addition to which there may be special rates for separate and distinct parts of any district.

Rates and special rates respectively not to exceed one shilling per acre in any one year; but with consent of two-thirds of the ratepayers, general or special rates may be increased to any amount beyond one shilling per acre. When rates are assessed on the annual value there is no maximum fixed.

With consent of the General Board assessment may be made on the annual value of property; when this course has once been adopted, all future rates must be levied on the annual value.

The local boards have no fixed endowment; they may, with consent of the General Board, accept loans on the security of the assessment for making, maintaining, or improving any road or roads.

Moneys may be voted in aid of any district, but must be expended under the supervision of the General Road Board.

The rates levied have generally been one shilling per acre, although in some cases they have been as low as threepence.

During the last two years the Provincial Government have subsidized the districts at the rate of £2 to £1 raised by the district. This has been a great inducement to the boards to levy assessments, in some cases unnecessarily, with the view to secure a share of the Provincial revenue so long as this scheme continues, as most of the settlers are under the impression that it cannot be maintained for any length of time. The result has been that a considerable amount of revenue has been collected, and generally judiciously expended in road making and other improvements of a permanent nature. The powers conferred on the Boards under the Otago Roads Ordinances are not considered sufficient, and at the last session of the Provincial Council a Select Committee was appointed to consider those Ordinances with a view to their amendment. The report of the Committee, which was unanimously adopted by the Council, is hereto annexed.

[D. R.]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF OTAGO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL (SESSION 24).

[Above referred to.]

IV.—Roads Ordinances (Final).

(BROUGHT UP BY MR. McINDOE, 3RD JUNE, 1868.)

Your Committee have been engaged in the preparation of a Bill embracing the alterations they consider necessary in the "Roads Ordinance, 1865," but find that, as the Session is near a close, they will not be able to have the Bill sufficiently matured to be submitted for the consideration of the Council this Session, and therefore recommend the following resolutions:—

1. That the present system of Local Boards be abolished, and that Road Trusts *comprising large areas be substituted*; such Road Trusts to be incorporated and to have, *inter alia*, the following incidents, viz.,—Permanency of tenure of members, power of taxation upon annual rental of property, powers of closing and opening roads; making bye-laws and regulations, with a penalty for breach thereof not exceeding £50; and all other necessary powers and privileges.
2. That each road district shall be divided into wards for the purpose of representation only, and that the boundaries of the trusts and wards be defined and fixed by Ordinance of the Provincial Council.
3. That each road district should receive, as an endowment, waste lands of the Crown in proportion of one-tenth of the acreage contained within the limits of the district; and where the whole land within the district has been sold, scrip to the extent of £1 for every ten acres of land in the district shall be issued by the Superintendent—such scrip to be available in the purchase of unsold lands in the Province.
4. That His Honor the Superintendent be requested to have a Bill prepared and submitted to the General Assembly at its next Session, enabling this Provincial Council to endow Road Trusts out of the waste lands of the Crown, as specified in the third of the above resolutions.