

An Act to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to District Highways.

(Validated by Provincial Acts Validation Act, 1868, No. 79.)

The Superintendent is authorized to divide the Province into districts, as well as to subdivide, alter, or reunite them, subject to six months' notice of the intention to do so, and the several existing boards being first communicated with.

The qualification for a vote for the district is, a freehold estate not let for two years and upwards, or a leasehold estate not underlet for two years and upwards (subject to the actual payment of all rates, general or special); and the number of votes assigned to each ratepayer is regulated by the extent of his holding: thus, under 200 acres gives one vote; 200 and upwards, two votes; and for every additional 500 acres up to 3,000 acres, one vote for each 500 acres.

The first annual meeting is to be summoned by a Justice of the Peace, on a requisition from five voters, after certain preliminaries, and the meeting first of all shall elect a chairman and then a Board of Wardens of not less than four nor more than six persons; then fix the amount of the rate to be levied severally for the construction, repair, and maintenance of all highways of each district, other than main roads; and lastly, appoint two auditors, who shall not be members of the board; and upon a like requisition the Justice may at any time convene a general meeting of the voters after due notice, &c., to do any of the above acts, or to provide for otherwise carrying out the provisions of the Act; and should the board fail to keep the roads in the district in an efficient state of repair, any three rate-payers may summon the chairman before the nearest Bench of Magistrates, who, after hearing the case, may order the requisite repairs to be made without delay; and in case of non-compliance with the order, the Superintendent may withhold any contribution to the board; and the Superintendent may also, in case of the ratepayers of a district neglecting to appoint a board or to impose a rate, cause a repairing rate to be levied and expended not exceeding ninepence per acre.

After the first constitution of a district and election of a Board of Wardens, annual meetings of ratepayers are to be held to decide upon the rate or rates for construction, or maintenance and repair, for the ensuing year; but the rate is not to exceed one shilling an acre for construction, and ninepence for maintenance and repair, and need not necessarily be uniform; and the board may, if they deem it right and equitable, exonerate, either wholly or in part, any land from such rate. (Clause 16.)

At every alternate annual meeting a new Board of Wardens is to be elected, the old members being eligible for re-election; the number of votes exercisable by each ratepayer being regulated by the extent of his holding (as before stated).

(F. J.)

PROVINCE OF NELSON.**The Nelson Country Roads Act, 1856.****The Nelson Country Roads Act, 1856, Amendment Act, 1857.****The Nelson Country Roads Act, 1857, Amendment Act, 1863.**

THESE Acts provide for the election of a board of five members—three to be a quorum; electors of first board to be on Provincial Electoral Roll—afterwards to be ratepayers; districts to be proclaimed by the Superintendent, to whom is given the power to nominate a board in case of failure of the inhabitants of districts to elect one.

Board to assess property in district, and levy rate not exceeding twopence in the pound on value to sell. Appeal against assessment to Bench of Magistrates in districts.

Funds raised by rate to be employed in repair of trunk roads proclaimed by Superintendent; but Superintendent may authorize excess to be devoted to district roads.

Powers given to board to abate public nuisances.

Power to board to make bye-laws.

The districts are of very unequal sizes, ranging from about thirty to over one thousand square miles.

No fixed endowment except dog-tax.

Rates are supplemented by vote of Provincial Council according to circumstances and necessities of each district.

Board has power to levy special rates for construction of bye-roads.

Each ratepayer has one vote only.

Only one toll-bar in Nelson, close to town (on Waimea Road); let, and brings in about £600, which goes to Road Board.

(O. C.)

PROVINCE OF MARLBOROUGH.**The Roads Ordinance, 1862.****The Roads Ordinance, 1862, Amendment Ordinance, 1867.**

THE latter Ordinance (validated last session by Act of the General Assembly,) repeals certain former Ordinances, and constitutes certain (21) districts for the purposes of the Ordinance.

The Superintendent is authorized to appoint a commission to examine and classify into five classes all private lands in the Province, and from their report is to be prepared (by persons appointed by the Superintendent) a list of persons qualified to vote and take part in a general meeting of the inhabitants