

1876.

NEW ZEALAND.

APPORTIONMENT OF LAND REVENUE.

(COPY OF RESOLUTIONS RELATIVE TO THE, PASSED AT A MEETING OF CHAIRMEN OF THE ROAD BOARD DISTRICTS BETWEEN THE RAKAIA AND RANGITATA RIVERS.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

COPY OF RESOLUTIONS passed at a Meeting of Chairmen of the Road Districts between the Rangitata and Rakaia Rivers, held at Ashburton on Tuesday, 4th July, 1876.

1. That the district has always felt aggrieved by being dealt with by the Provincial Government on a less liberal system of apportionment of land revenue than has been established by Act of the General Assembly since 1867 in the case of the Timaru and Gladstone District.

2. That, although aggrieved at the unfair distribution of land revenue (having only received £47,351 out of a sum of £561,095, the proceeds of about 280,000 acres of land sold), yet the district had, through its member in the Provincial Council, a means of constitutionally protesting against such distribution.

3. That since, by Act of the General Assembly, the Provincial Council has not been permitted to meet and discuss the distribution of land revenue among the Road Boards from the expiration of the last financial year on the 31st March, the Chairmen of the four Road Boards between the Rivers Rakaia and Rangitata feel compelled to lay before the House of Representatives the unfortunate position in which they are placed by the proposed distribution of Road Board grants for the current half-year, feeling confident that the injustice involved in the small percentage of grant out of land revenue received by the Provincial Treasury is one that ought to be remedied by a more equitable apportionment, in order that the several road districts may have the power of constructing roads so as to open up the purchased lands for occupation.

4. That a tramway or light railway, connecting the main southern line with Alford Forest and the coal mines and stone quarries of Mount Somers, is urgently needed by the district, and that a fair apportionment of land revenue would provide funds for its completion.

5. That, above all, in contemplation of a change of administrative institutions under which all districts, settled and half-settled, will in all probability be treated alike, those districts which have not yet received their just share of land revenue will manifestly be placed in a most unfavourable position. Not that, as a principle, it is undesirable to subsidise settled districts, but that districts which have the heavy work of making the greater portion of their roads should be assisted on a more liberal scale out of the revenue raised therein.

6. That the memorial, a copy of which is hereunto annexed, be adopted and forwarded by Mr. Grigg, the chairman of the meeting, together with the resolutions, to the Member for the district, for presentation to the House of Representatives, along with statistics in support of the memorial, showing:—

- (1.) United area of the four districts—viz., 1,420,000 acres.
- (2.) United area of Mandeville, Avon, Heathcote, Spreydon, and Riccarton Road Districts—viz., 170,000 acres.
- (3.) Total revenue contributed by the four Ashburton Districts from land sales up to 30th June, 1876—viz., £561,095.
- (4.) Total amount of grants to the four Ashburton Road Boards up to 30th June, £47,351, being equivalent to $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the land sales during the same period.
- (5.) Total revenue contributed by the Mandeville, Avon, Heathcote, Spreydon, and Riccarton Districts during the same period, £111,071.
- (6.) Total amount of grants to the Mandeville, Avon, Heathcote, Spreydon, and Riccarton Districts up to 30th June, 1876—viz., £205,411 5s. 4d., being equivalent to 185 per cent. of the land sales during the same period.
- (7.) Total amount of proceeds of land sales for the two years ending 30th June, 1876, for the four districts—viz., £191,663 3s. 3d.
- (8.) Total amount of grants for the two years ending 30th June, 1876, to the four districts, £32,102 1s.
- (9.) Amount of land sales in the four Ashburton Districts in April, May, June, 1876, £83,992 4s.

- (10.) Amount of grant to the four Ashburton Districts for the six months ending September 30, 1876, £5,750.
- (11.) Amount of land sales in the five Road Districts of Mandeville, Avon, Heathcote, Spreydon, and Riccarton, for the three months of April, May, June, 1876—viz., trifling.
- (12.) Amount of grant for six months ending September 30, 1876, to the five districts of Mandeville, Avon, Heathcote, Spreydon, and Riccarton—viz., £5,400.

COPY of RESOLUTIONS passed at a Public Meeting held at the Library Hall, Ashburton, on Monday, 17th July, 1876.

1. That this meeting approves of the action taken by the Chairmen of the Road Boards in memorializing the Government with reference to the distribution of the Land Fund raised in this district, and it desires to confirm the resolutions as passed in support of the memorial.

2. That this meeting begs to bring under the notice of the Government the claim which the district has for the construction of a branch railway to Mount Somers and Alford Forest, funds for which could easily be obtained if an equitable distribution of the Land Fund had been observed.

3. That this meeting begs to protest most strongly against the proposal to call the district the Rakaia County, as it is contrary to long-established usage and to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants, and an unnecessary slight to the largely populated centre of the district; and that they are of opinion that it should still be known by the name of Ashburton.

4. That the resolutions be forwarded to the Government through Mr. Wason, the member for the district, with a request that he will strongly urge the equitable claim of the several Road Boards on the Land Funds of the district; and that a copy be forwarded to the Provincial Government, with a request that they will support them so far as they are able.

5. That this meeting desires to bring to the notice of the Government the necessity of having a Resident Magistrate appointed for this district.

6. That the Chairman be requested to forward the foregoing resolutions, together with a petition as read, to the Honorable the Minister of Justice.

By Authority: GEORGE DILSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1876.