

Question 16—*continued.*

that any number of Road Boards, who may, by a three-fourths majority of ratepayers in each district, desire to unite for economy of business, may, on application to the County Council, be formed into a united district, under a common style, but in such united district a separate account shall be kept of each original district debited with all works carried out in it, and with a rateable proportion of the common establishment charges, and credited with the amount of rates raised in such original district, one uniform rate being levied on the whole united district.

**Raglan—**

Newcastle—None.

**Whakulane—**

Opotiki—This Board thinks that County Councils should be abolished as at present constituted, as being too expensive in working. Councillors should not have the power to vote themselves salaries, as at present, out of the rates of the county. All Councillors should be honorary, the same as Road Boards are. The Chairmen of Road Boards in the counties should administer affairs of county.

Tauranga—Construction of main roads to be undertaken and kept in repair at the expense of the Government, but under the supervision of County Councils.

**Taranaki—**

Waiwakaiho—I think it an injustice to let Road Boards have the rates from land fronting on or within a mile of the county roads. Such properties should be made a separate road district, and should be rated by the county up to 1s. in the pound, according to requirements.

**Oakura—No answer.**

Mangarai (J. T. Uppjohn)—There is at present great injustice done by District Road Commissioners in totally ignoring great parts of roads altogether. I believe all improvements should begin nearest to centres of population, and then be continued to end of road. For example, suppose it is decided to form a bush road, such formation should begin nearest to a town, and continued to end of road before graveling is commenced below. Above all things, an appeal should be granted to a totally independent body, and that body should be the Magistrates in petty sessions, and not, as at present, the County Councils, who take no interest in what does not locally concern them. The audit of accounts should be much more stringent than at present. I have known Auditors not to have seen the books until the day of the general meeting. If the Act was found giving the meeting power to say how the rates should be expended, much greater interest would be taken in meetings than now. I will give an instance of the ruling of a County Chairman: He said if there were two roads in a district, and the appeal proved the money was unfairly expended on one of them, the Council would grant relief; but, as there was but one, the Council could not interfere to adjudge how the money was to be spent, although it was shown that hundreds of pounds had been drawn from upper end of district to lower hills and then road at lower end, while the upper part

was in a state of nature, except the timber being removed. The Act should direct that when a district had been opened up, say, twenty years, it should be brought into a certain state. Above all things, do not say that such and such things may be done, but that they shall be done. Such Act should direct that all meetings should be held in the several districts.

**Patea—**

Wairoa—The Board approves of taking the Government valuation, instead of making an annual valuation.

**Manawatu—**

Manchester—No answer.

**Rangitikei—**

Sandon and Carnarvon—No others.

Wairarapa East—Would strongly urge the adoption in the Roads Construction measure of the principle of providing for the construction of roads through Crown lands either before or immediately after the sale of the lands. The land revenue should provide the necessary funds.

Castlepoint—This Board urge upon the Government the adoption of the principle of constructing roads through Crown lands out of the purchase-money.

**Wairarapa West—**

Masterton—The Board is strongly of opinion that all the net Land Fund should be spent in opening up Crown lands either before or immediately after sale.

**Waimea—**

Suburban North—None.

Amuri—In this district it would be far better to have only one local body, the Council, who could easily deal with matters now pertaining to the Road Board. We consider also it would be most beneficial if Government would take over main roads and bridges, as the bulk of the Road Board funds now go to their maintenance and construction, which bears very hardly on outlying parts; and, in fact, roughly speaking, if all property-holders were compelled to spend their present rates on their own properties, we think a far more satisfactory state of things would be arrived at. An instance of the above reasons may explain: Our Board has expended large sums of money on the main North Road from Hurunui to the Waiau. Being new metal, and in some places perhaps not sufficiently blinded or broken small enough, the travelling public will not go on it, but prefer the tussocks, &c. The ratepayers who live off this line cry out at more expenditure on this line, as they argue, and in some instances correctly, that they are not even able to get from their own properties on the portion of the main road, at all events without considerable risk. They, therefore, prefer to see a new road overgrown with thistles and unused, instead of having, perhaps, a good bridle-track to enable them to get down from their own back runs.

**Marlborough—**

Havelock—No.

**Kaikoura—No answer.**

Kaikoura—No.

**Selwyn—**

Avon—No answer.

Malvern—No.

Rakaia—No answer.

Spreydon—No answer.

Springs—None.

Upper Waimakariri—We think the principle of consulting the local bodies, as per circular, sound and good, and likely to become appreci-

ated by them to the benefit of the country.

Ellesmere—It is highly desirable that all Acts under which Road Boards are acting should be consolidated.

Akaroa—It is thought desirable that the Chairmen of County Councils should be created *ex officio* Justices of the Peace for the time of holding office.

**Ashburton—**

South Rakaia—No answer.

Longbeach—Think that clause 37 of the Counties Act gives too great a facility to Councils to dissolve Road Boards. Such power should be given only on the petition of two-thirds of ratepayers representing two-thirds of the value of rateable property within the road district.

Upper Ashburton—Any person selling land for cash or on deferred payments to give notice at the county chambers of the County Council of the county where the land is situated. This will give local bodies greater facilities for finding owners of properties for the purpose of rating, &c.

**Geraldine—**

Levels—No answer.

Levels (Chairman)—From extensive observation during the last twelve years in Otago, Southland, and Canterbury, my opinion is that the Road Board system, with sufficient representation, is the one best suited to the country generally in developing its roads and bridges most efficiently and economically. The representation for such purposes in a country district of large extent is inadequate to the proper distribution of its finances. As legislation stands, the County Councils fulfil purposes which Road Boards are unable to undertake legally; and, if powers of counties were extended, as suggested in No. 5, and the practical part of the business left to Road Boards, I think generally the system would suit the present state of the colony. Such an anomaly as Road Boards and a County Council each striking rates for road and bridge purposes, and carrying on each a separate system and official expense, as in the case of the Waitaki County Council with nine members, and the included Road Boards with nearly sixty members, should not be allowed to exist, as it is a duplication of expense and waste of power.

Waimate—This Council is of opinion that the chief alterations required in the Counties Act is to make better provision for raising funds for the construction and maintenance of local public works; and, to attain this object, desires to inform the Colonial Treasurer that, in the opinion of this Council, the only legitimate sources of revenue are—(1) rates; (2) a proportion of the Land Fund; (3) a proportion of the annual rental derived from all Crown lands within the county. And to give effect to these suggestions this Council begs respectfully to urge the Government to amend the Counties Act at once, so that the county shall receive from the 1st day of May last 50 per cent. of the yearly rental now paid to the Crown Lands Department on account of all unsold lands within the County of Waimate; and also 50 per cent. of the cash paid to the Commissioner of Crown Lands on account of lands sold as freehold, whether for cash or on deferred payments, within the County of Waimate.