

1882.

NEW ZEALAND.

LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES.

(CIRCULAR ACCOMPANYING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO LOCAL BODIES, WITH REPLIES RECEIVED THERETO.)

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

Government Buildings,

Wellington, 13th May, 1882.

SIR,—

The Government, in accordance with the pledges given last session, have under consideration the propriety of introducing in the ensuing session measures to improve the position of Local Governing Bodies, and to give them financial assistance in the prosecution of public works.

The Government think that before Parliament deals with these measures it would be desirable for the local bodies to have an opportunity of directly expressing their opinions on some of the more important points.

I therefore have the honor to ask that you will, on behalf of the body over which you preside, answer the questions in the enclosed paper, or as many of them as you take an interest in, and return such answers to me at your earliest convenience.

The bulk of the questions, you will observe, relate to the constitution, powers, and duties of the governing bodies.

For your guidance, I propose offering an explanation on some of the matters to be dealt with.

It is, I think, generally admitted that the government of towns and villages under the Municipal Corporations and Town Districts Acts needs no great alteration. Amendments on points of detail will no doubt be from time to time required.

It is also generally admitted that there are a number of special purposes for which special bodies are required, and must be allowed to exist at present, such as harbour management, education, &c., &c.

Therefore it is only to the government of the country districts that this circular is intended to apply.

The Government, after careful inquiry, are satisfied that there are some districts which desire the dual governments of Counties and Road Boards, and others which wish only the government of one or the other of these bodies. It is evident that the legislation, to be satisfactory, must be so framed as to allow each district to choose readily which of such forms of government it prefers to have.

One of the measures most needed is a consolidating Road Board Act, which, by bringing the whole law relating to Road Boards into one statute, would much simplify the working of these institutions.