

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES FROM COUNTY COUNCILS, HELD IN WELLINGTON, JULY, 1885.

1. THAT the proposals now before the House as to local government are not calculated to develop a permanent system of effective local government in the colony.

2. That this Conference is of opinion that local government should remain *in statu quo* during the present year, and that funds should be provided to meet the demands of the counties and Road Boards, under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act; and that, meantime, a Royal Commission should issue to inquire into the question, with a view to facilitate legislation.

3. That the European ratepayers are suffering considerable injustice under the administration of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, and that this Conference is of opinion that there are large districts in which all land owned by Natives should be liable to the same responsibilities as those imposed upon land owned by Europeans.

4. That the money for the construction of all roads to open up particular blocks of Crown lands be handed over to the County Councils, who shall have an authority to settle the grades and location of roads, subject to the approval of the Government to general line and termini of road.

5. That, if a Royal Commission is appointed to inquire into local government, the question of location of roads to open up Crown land be also within the power of the Commission.

6. That the Hospital and Charitable Aid Bill appears to deal with the matter in a way that may be made satisfactory, and may be amended so as to make it a useful measure. That the amendments that are essential are that the interposition of the District Boards should cease to exist when once a local institution is constituted.

7. That any local authority contributing to the expenses of any hospital or charitable institution should be represented on the governing body of trustees in proportion to its contribution.

8. That it is desirable that power be given to County Councils to alter their boundaries in cases where the necessities of communication make such an alteration desirable; and also to remove one or more properties from one road district to another, on the application of the owner or owners, and with the consent of the Boards interested.

9. That the suggestion from the Rodney County Council that compensation for lands taken for roads under the Public Works Act should be based on the value assessed under the property-tax, with 50 per cent. added, be agreed to.

In addition to the matters referred to in the several resolutions, the Conference considered other questions, notably the proposal to make County Chairmen elected by popular vote. The Conference were unanimously of opinion that such an alteration was not desirable.

It was also considered that any alteration in the way of providing funds for local bodies should take the form of allowing them to raise the whole of their revenue, and thus bring about a complete separation of local and general finance.

The Conference waited upon the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer and submitted their resolutions and views upon the several matters referred to. The deputation was most cordially received, and consideration of the suggestions was promised.

11th July, 1885.

F. SUTTON,
Chairman, County Conference.

APPENDIX B.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HON. WALTER JOHNSTON UPON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE COLONY OF NEW ZEALAND.

SIR,—

Dry River, Wairarapa, 11th June, 1883.

You desired me to incorporate in a memorandum a list of subjects of local government which it may be advisable to grant to local governing bodies other than those at present enjoyed by them. I have the honour to reply as follows:—

1. That with the exception of the small Municipalities and Road Boards the people of this colony exercise no control over such purely local questions as matters connected with sheep, cattle, fencing, draining, dog-registration, rabbits, and the like. In proof thereof I refer you to the local by-laws, rules, and regulations. There are few, if any. The counties possess no by-laws worthy of the name. All Acts, therefore, conferring powers of local government are almost inoperative. There is scarcely any efficient local government in the colony.

2. The counties as at present constituted appear to be incapable of realising their true position. This can only be expected. For if it is difficult to find ninety good members for the House of Representatives, it must be surely more difficult to find five hundred Councillors to frame local laws. The most enlightened of the counties very properly consider themselves road districts, and either act as Highway Boards, and abolish the smaller road bodies, entailing great confusion thereby, or abandon their functions to existing road bodies. The people do not care for a dual highway rate.

3. The Municipalities, when not erected in too small centres, and the Road Boards, when not interfered with, fairly enough comply with the wants of local government expected from them, although the administration of the latter may be expensive. A slightly expensive administration is preferable, however, to the existing state of confusion between Road Boards and counties. I fancy that nearly every branch of local government in the colony is in a state of confusion, excepting the Education Boards and the large Municipalities. Even the town local Boards scarcely know their functions. The Harbour Boards work fairly well, but I am unacquainted with their operations.