

appoint an official staff of inspectors or officers to work with the local bodies. The existing system of administration appears to me quite incomplete, and must necessarily be so until the settlers join with the Government officers in carrying the laws into effect. For instance, in the matter of fencing, I ask whether fence-viewers are not required to settle differences arising between settlers. Such local officers could best report to local bodies all over the colony, who could best determine what kind of fencing was required in particular localities. Next as to drainage. Constant disputes are arising over this particular question; yet there is no local administration to settle differences. I can refer Major Smith to more than a score of settlers—possessors of both large and small areas—who would be glad of some general system by which they could properly drain their lands. . . . What applies to this particular district equally applies all over the colony, although there are one or two districts in Canterbury which are drainage districts under a Provincial (Canterbury) Act. It is a farce to suppose that the Public Works Act meets this local want. Next as to sheep ear-marks. This matter is simply in a state of confusion. Settlers send in a return of their sheep ear-marks, and these returns are filed; but what local authority is there to say that, to prevent confusion and annoyance, A shall have one ear-mark, B another, and C another? The Sheep Inspectors might see to this, but the fact is patent that they do not do so.* Then, as to scab and other matters connected with sheep. Surely Major Smith must remember that one of the most influential and representative meetings ever held in Carterton took place over this very question about a year or so since—a sufficient token that the settlers would be glad to work with the Government officials if they were allowed to do so. Next as to cattle-branding. I believe that the Government officers are taking a little more interest in this matter than formerly; yet the interest even now is of the very slightest. And so of many other matters I might refer to were it not that it would make this letter too long. The following items of administration I select for local administration: (1) Waste lands (Chairmen of Counties to sit upon the Waste Lands Boards); (2) fencing; (3) drainage; (4) sheep matters; (5) cattle- and horse-branding; (6) main roads, bridges, and ferries; (7) impounding; (8) charitable aid (exclusive of lunatic asylums for the present); (9) licensing (Is not the present enormous number of Licensing Boards unsuitable to the circumstances of the colony?); (10) rabbits; (11) slaughterhouses; (12) cemeteries; (13) forest-conservation; (14) harbours (under special Harbour Boards). I might extend the list, but it will be at once seen that two sets of local administration in the Wairarapa Valley upon the above subjects would be practically cumbrous and unnecessary.† Of one thing I feel certain: that the settlers of the colony will never rest content whilst all these matters are attempted to be administered from one centre. A young colony cannot possibly develop itself under one set of central rigid rules. I therefore ask for a reduced number of counties, but I have no wish to return to provincialism.

Greytown, 6th December, 1882.

I am, &c.,
COLEMAN PHILLIPS.

APPENDIX F.

THE COUNTY QUESTION AT TARANAKI.

EIGHT Chairmen of Road Boards in the Taranaki District met on Saturday to consider the advisability of suspending the county. Mr. Marsh, who was voted to the chair, submitted that the Chairmen of the road districts could undertake the management of the roads and bridges in their various districts, and they could meet at stated times to consult together as to what was required for the different roads, just as the County Council did at present. He considered the present system of maintaining both County Councils and Road Boards was very expensive. Mr. Faull was of a similar opinion. They were overgoverned and overtaxed. He thought the Boards should have a general bridge fund. As far as the main roads were concerned, they would be far more economically managed under the Boards separately than by the County Council. •

Several of the other members having spoken to the same effect, Mr. Chapman moved, "That this meeting is of opinion that the Counties Act should be suspended in the County of Taranaki, and the necessary steps be at once taken to carry out the object." In speaking to the resolution, he said the matter was very important, as money had been squandered by the County Council, and a change was required. There would be little difficulty in suspending the County Council; and the Chairmen of the various road districts could take upon themselves all the liabilities of the Council, and also all the revenue.

Mr. Faull seconded the motion. He was certain that, were a committee of the Road Boards formed, local interests would be better looked after than they were at present by the County Council.‡ He did not expect to see the taxes reduced by the proposed change, but he did expect to see more work done for the money. It was certain that a change in local government was wanted in the county, but the first thing to do was to take steps to have the County Council abolished, and they could settle details afterwards.

Mr. J. Hill moved, and Mr. George seconded, "That a petition be drawn up in proper form *re* abolishing the County Council, and a copy thereof sent to each Road Board." The motion was carried unanimously.—*Taranaki Herald*, November, 1883.

* The Stock Inspectors see to this matter now; but the area of the branding districts, strange to say, is far too large. Very few settlers trust to ear-marks now for positive identification.—C. P., 1894.

† This refers to the absolute folly of having two counties in the one Wairarapa Valley.—C. P., 1894.

‡ Any such committee of Road Boards means a more extensive area of local government, equivalent, in fact, to a county.—C. P., 1894.