

163. *Mr. Hornsby.*] Then, as a matter of fact, if you had that representation you would not object to counties being formed instead of road districts?—We do not mind if the term "Road Board" is taken away as long as we are divided into workably sized districts.

Mr. Hornsby: Coming down to bed-rock, you do not object to being made into counties if you have the powers.

164. *Mr. Lang* (to *Mr. Witty*).] In the first place, I understand that the Selwyn County has a dual form of local government: is that correct?—Yes.

165. What I want to find out is the amount of rates struck and collected?—None at all. The County strikes no rates.

166. The next question is what rates are struck and collected in each road district?—When you asked the question about rates I misunderstood. Of course, we have got water-rates, and these we have to collect. We supply nearly the whole of Selwyn with water. We have no general rates. Our general rate for the Templeton Road District is $\frac{1}{7}$ d. We do not deal with the special rate to pay for loans borrowed.

167. *Mr. Buddo.*] I desire to ask *Mr. McMillan*, representing Ellesmere, if there is any other power the Road Board desires that is not provided for by legislation?—The only thing is the drainage. We consider the power under the drainage clause defective.

168. Have you any difficulty with regard to bridges on boundaries—*i.e.*, with the other local bodies? It is a question of legislation suitable for your requirements. I want to know if you have any difficulty in erecting or maintaining the boundary bridges?—No.

169. Do you consider the present administration of your district as economical as it possibly could be under any other form of local government?—You could not work it from Christchurch as economically.

170. If you went in to form a county, what would be your idea of the area of a suitable district to work; would it be similar to the Ellesmere?—Ellesmere would make a suitable county.

171. *Mr. Buddo* (to *Mr. Comer*).] With regard to the main road, do you find it a heavy tax on your resources?—Very heavy indeed.

172. (To *Mr. McMillan*).] Have you any assistance towards the bridge?—No; a clause was drafted for "The Public Works Act, 1900," but it did not go far enough. It allowed us to impose a license-fee.

173. Can you suggest any amalgamation of your immediate Road Boards which would assist you in any respect?—We have to keep the Taitapu Road fit for traffic up there.

174. What would you consider a suitable area for a county?—Any two Road Boards.

175. *Mr. Rhodes* (to *Mr. McMillan*).] About the rates in the Ellesmere District: do you have to raise a special rate for charitable aid?—Yes.

176. The Selwyn County Council collects a good deal of revenue from your district?—Yes, water-rates and other revenue.

177. And you consider you can manage the water-races equally as well as the County Council?—Equally as well.

178. You have a town district within Ellesmere; what is the feeling—do you wish to take over the management, or leave it to be managed by the Town Board?—I would leave it as it is at present.

179. (To *Mr. Comer*).] You represent Halswell. I gather from certain regulations gazetted last year that you have considerable trouble with regard to traffic. I suppose you find it a heavy item?—Extremely. The traffic to Christchurch was injured to the extent of £1,500 over about four miles of road. It is almost impossible to keep the roads at all. Hence the reason why we wish to get a wheel-tax.

180. And you think that under the regulations gazetted last year you would be able to collect that tax?—There seems to be a difference of opinion amongst the lawyers in Christchurch about it. One solicitor says we must impose a tax per ton, and another solicitor says we can do without that. I may say that last winter there were huge quantities of stone dragged over that road to Christchurch and the surrounding districts.

181. Have you any water-races in your district?—No, but unfortunately we have some outside which terminate in a river in our district.

182. *Mr. Hardy* (to *Mr. McMillan*).] *Mr. McMillan* said something about controlling water-races: how would you propose to control the water-races in different districts?—I think there could be a Water-race Board formed to manage water-races.

Mr. Hardy: Consisting probably of Chairmen of Road Boards.

Mr. Meredith: That would mean the creation of a new body.

Mr. McMillan: I might say that we are in the same position as they are in Halswell.

WEDNESDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1901.

Hon. Mr. W. C. SMITH, M.L.C., examined. (No. 15.)

Witness: The Hawke's Bay Provincial District has been unable to send any delegates to give evidence before this Committee, and I have been asked to state the case for some of the local bodies. I may say that I have been Chairman of a County Council for about ten years, and a Road Board for about fifteen years, and have had a large experience of both local bodies. The Hawke's Bay District is at present divided into four counties, while all the Road Boards are merged in the Hawke's Bay County, and one local body represents both, and has done so for many years, and this seems to give general satisfaction. The next County is Waipawa, and this is worked with a mixed Road Board and county system. My experience is that the county system is much the better one for local government. I would point out this to the Committee: of the Town Boards—one