

THURSDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1901.

Mr. F. G. BOLTON examined. (No. 16.)

*The Chairman* : I understand, Mr. Bolton, you desired to appear before this Committee with a view to giving evidence. The Committee will now be very pleased to hear anything you have to say.

*Witness* : The object of my appearance before the Committee, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, is that a petition has been prepared with a view to the constitution of a road district for a marine suburb of Wellington on the other side of the harbour, viz., Day's Bay, and this petition has been signed by over 170 out of 225 ratepayers; and, so far as I know, it might be signed by almost the whole 225 if taken to each one of them; but, of course, a certain number of them are not get-at-able, and others are absentees. However, considerably more than two-thirds of them have signed it, as required by the Act. The petition has been advertised, and will, in all probability, be considered by the Hutt County Council early next month. The object of my appearance is to draw the attention of the Committee to this particular case, and to ask that, assuming that existing road districts are to be preserved, they will also include road districts in process of formation. In this matter all the necessary steps have been taken by the petitioners, and nothing more remains to be done, except the constitution of the district by the Hutt County Council. I might say that the principal reasons for the proposed change are these: this district of Day's Bay has nothing in common with the governing body, the Hutt County Council. It is a marine suburb with a growing population, and will no doubt ere long become a populous district, and the present governing body, being a farming community, has nothing whatever in common with its interests, and that is the principal reason why the people wish to get control of their own affairs.

1. *Mr. Symes*.] It is at present a part of the Hutt County Council?—Yes.

2. Would this particular road district have to go through any other part of the county?—There are two methods of communication—by sea and through the Hutt Borough.

3. But will they have two roads?—They have a road which leads as far as the Hutt Borough. This petition was meant to cover the particular case mentioned by you, and provides that the road district should extend from the Hutt Borough southward to the terminus of the former road, so that no liability would be cast on the Hutt County Council which they should not be asked to meet.

4. *Mr. Buddo*.] Would it not be quite as easy for your district to proceed to form another local body, such as a town or borough district?—No. The objection with regard to a town district or borough is that we have not the population. We have 225 ratepayers, and the district is growing, but we have not the necessary population at present. I might suggest that the section of the Act retaining road districts should be extended to include a road district in process of formation.

Mr. ELL, M.H.R., attended and made a statement. (No. 17.)

*Witness* : Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—There are just one or two points I would like to raise. The first one is with regard to objections to the necessity of having so many different pollings. There are a number of local bodies which are elective. For instance, in Canterbury we have a River Board, a Drainage Board, and part of the members of the Harbour Board. This necessitates three different pollings. I would suggest that if you fixed the date of the polling for the election for members of County Councils, Road Boards, and Town Boards on the same day as the elections for Borough Councils, thus having the whole of the elections for different local bodies on the same date, by such an arrangement the members of these other bodies could be elected at the same polling. It would save a lot of trouble to ratepayers and a lot of expense. This is one of the matters I wished to refer to, and I think it can easily be remedied. There is one other matter, with regard to the rating. In a number of districts they have carried the rating on unimproved value system. As a case in point: I live in a district which carried this system of rating. It is proposed to attach a portion to a road district which has not adopted the rating on unimproved value system, and a complication would ensue; and as there are likely to be changes in the boundaries of districts this might crop up in a number of other cases. That is why I think it necessary to suggest that something should be done to meet such a difficulty. Then, with regard to the form of ballot-papers. As it is now, sometimes you may have ten or a dozen candidates to select from for three members, which would necessitate the striking out of, say, nine. A much better system would be to put a cross against the names of the people you want to vote for, and this would mean putting three crosses instead of striking out nine names.