

Sub-Enclosure.

On the subject of the amendments required in the County of Westland Act itself, resolutions were passed, of which a copy is annexed. They suggest a clearer distinction than the Act now provides between the powers and functions of the Colonial Government and those of the County Council, and they recommend that the latter should be confined generally to local subjects, and that those subjects should be placed entirely under its control.

These recommendations meet generally with the concurrence of the Colonial Government, and it will embody them in the amendments to be proposed in the Westland Act during the next session of the General Assembly. If these amendments should be assented to, Ministers believe that a form of local government will have been provided for this important district, which, while reserving to the Colonial Government the necessary control and authority in questions of general Colonial import, will at the same time provide an efficient and inexpensive machinery for the administration of local affairs, and for regulating the expenditure of revenues available for roads and other public works.

It is not, however, in its bearing on the interests of the County of Westland alone that Ministers consider this experiment an important one. Many of the circumstances which have made the Westland Act a necessity have their parallel in a greater or less degree in other parts of New Zealand. Owing to the growth, in many cases at a distance from Provincial capitals, of new centres of population, which had no existence when the present Provinces were created, Provincial Governments no longer furnish that provision for the local administration of local affairs which is an important element of efficient government in any country, but especially in the case of one so peculiarly situated as is the Colony of New Zealand; moreover, the financial embarrassments in which several of the Provincial Governments have become involved make it exceedingly doubtful whether in some instances they can themselves be maintained for any length of time. Under these circumstances any practical instance of how local administration can be economically and effectually provided must be valuable; and looking to the results of the Westland experiment, so far as it has yet been tried, Ministers believe that it will prove to be a great step towards the harmonious combination of complete local self-government with all necessary national unity.

For His Excellency the Governor.

J. HALL.

Sub-Enclosure to Enclosure in No. 37.

REPORT of the SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to consider and report upon necessary Amendments in the County of Westland Act.

YOUR Committee having considered the question of amending the County of Westland Act have adopted the following Resolutions, which they submit for discussion by the Council, with the view of their being transmitted to the Colonial Secretary and the Speakers of both Houses of the Legislature:—

1. That it is desirable the County Council should consist of eight elected members, namely—
Two for the Municipality of Hokitika; two for the Municipality of Greymouth; and one for each of the Road Districts.
2. That the Westland County Council be invested with the power to appropriate money out of the County Fund for the construction of main roads, bridges, wharves and other public works, and retain the supervision over works thus constructed until such works have been handed over to the Municipalities or Road Boards for maintenance.
3. That it is desirable the respective revenues and functions of the County Council and of the Government should be clearly defined, the expenses of departments which are to be controlled by the Government being voted by the General Assembly, and the revenues which are available for the County Council being placed at its sole disposal.
4. That the departments of Justice, Police, Gaol, and Harbours ought to be entirely under the control of the General Government, and all other departments hitherto under the Provincial Government entirely under the control of the County Council, subject, however, in the case of the Survey Department to such control, including the appointment of Chief Surveyor as may be necessary to ensure an efficient survey of those portions of Crown Lands for which the Governor may be called upon to issue Crown Grants.
5. That it is desirable that the Chairman of the County Council be elected by the Members of the County Council.
6. That the Road Boards shall have the control and management of all roads, bridges, wharves, ferries, drains, watercourses, streams, &c., with the exception of main roads, and bridges and ferries along main roads.
7. That it is desirable that the Municipal Councils and Road Boards furnish half-yearly returns to the Chairman of the County Council, of receipts and disbursements of all moneys by them.
8. That it is desirable that legal provision should be made for enabling holders of miners' rights and business licenses to vote in those districts in which their operations are carried on.
9. That it is desirable that holders of business licenses and miners' rights being aliens should be allowed to vote at Road Board elections.

26th day of February, 1868.

JOHN A. WHALL,
Chairman of Select Committee.

No. 38.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir G. F. BOWEN, G.C.M.G., to His Grace the Duke of BUCKINGHAM.

(No. 24.)
MY LORD DUKE,—

Government House, Auckland,
27th March, 1868.

1. With reference to my Despatch No. 17, of the 6th instant, I have the