

population is 1,566. The cost of administration, including the clerk's salary, and office expenses, and other small items, is under £200. We have over a hundred miles of metalled and shingled roads, all in first-class order, and about sixty-one bridges and culverts to maintain—some of them 300 ft. to 400 ft. long—exclusive of White's Bridge, on the Waimakariri River, and the principal road to the northern district. I might state, generally, that we also contribute to White's Bridge 21 per cent. to keep it in repair. We have a first-class clerk at £150 per annum, and he has carried on the work satisfactorily for about thirty years.

17. *Mr. Hogg.*] Is that the only officer you have?—Yes.

18. Do you require the services of an engineer at times?—No; the clerk does the engineering work also.

19. Do you think the work could be performed in an equally satisfactory manner if the Road Board were merged into a county—instead of five members you would need only one?—No, I do not think it would. Five members give their time gratis, and where there are back settlers they can go to him, or he goes to them, and then refers the matter to the Board, and the man's requirements are attended to straight away.

20. Could you give us a statement of the amount collected in rates?—£1,125.

21. *Mr. Hogg.*] Out of that how much has been spent on road-work?—About £900. It might be a little more—say, £1,000.

22. *Mr. Buddo.*] Your Road Board in its area has a large number of bridges over rivers?—Yes. We have Coutt's Island Bridge, 300 ft. long, and the bridge over the north branch of the Waimakariri, about 350 ft. We have to keep them, and also embankments, in repair.

23. The rivers there are frequently in flood: is it not necessary that members of the Board assist the surveyor in looking after protective works and bridges in flood-time?—Yes. The main road runs alongside the Waimakariri. Last year alone we had to spend £450 to maintain the road, and keep the river from washing it away.

24. Do you consider that any other system of local government, such as a County Council, would assist you to in any way cause greater efficiency or economy?—No, I do not think County Councils could do as well.

25. Are you interested in any outside boundary bridges; and, if so, have you any difficulty with the other local bodies, or do they meet you fairly?—Yes, we are interested with other local bodies in boundary bridges, and we are met fairly.

26. You wish no further legislation to assist you in the matter?—No.

27. *Mr. Flatman.*] You say your clerical work costs £150 per annum: do you pay anything extra for collecting rates?—No, the clerk collects the rates, and does the engineering. We never call in any extra assistance for our work.

28. *Mr. Houston.*] How long has your Road Board been in existence?—About thirty-six years.

29. During that time did you employ the services of a professional engineer?—Not to my knowledge.

30. And your clerk is competent to draw out plans and specifications for roads and bridges?—Yes.

31. Then, over and above your clerk, you only spend £50 for advertising and other incidentals?—Yes.

32. Do you think that in a sparsely settled district a Road Board could manage as economically as yours?—Yes.

33. Even in a district where it is necessary to employ a competent engineer? Where a number of such Road Boards exist in a county, do you not think it would be more economical to supply the services of one engineer than that each Road Board should have a professional engineer of its own?—No, I do not think so.

Surely one competent engineer could do the work of seven.

34. *Mr. Lang.*] Is the Counties Act in force in your district?—No.

35. What rates do you levy?—Our rate is $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

36. Is that what you have been in the habit of striking?—Yes; for the last three years.

37. *Mr. Pirani.*] It has been suggested in the Bill, as introduced, that there is no such thing as the County Council being supplanted; and it has been said that all the rates should be levied and collected by the County Council, and then a proportion should be divided amongst the road districts: what do you think of the proposal?—Looking at it from a Road Board point of view, I think the Road Boards are doing better work than the County Councils.

38. Do you think it would be better that road districts should do it as they do now?—Yes, sir, I do; I think we are best where we are.

39. *Mr. Hall.*] Can you tell me what rate has been struck, say, for a period of five or six years back?— $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the last three years.

40. Do you manage to get all your roads made, &c., by a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate?—Yes; we have no special loans.

41. *The Chairman.*] Have you any special grants?—No.

42. If you have no special rate, and no special grant, what was the position of the road when the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. commenced: was it in a state of nature?—No; a little road-making had been done, partly by the Provincial Government.

43. Were there any other roads made?—Yes; I think there was the main road—about three miles. This road, besides some others, was made out of the land-grants of 25 per cent.

44. How many miles of road were made previous to the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate out of grants and other sources?—There would be about half.

45. What is the average value of land in your district?—I am not a land-valuer; I should think from £14 to £15 per acre.