

Board to state that they consider the Counties Bill should be amended in the following respects: Road Boards at present within counties where Counties Act is suspended should be retained, with option of continuing as Road Board or County, notwithstanding limitations proposed as to area, value, or population. Retained Road Boards should absorb Drainage Boards and River Boards now in existence within road districts, and should have power to constitute new drainage districts. This Board strongly objects to franchise to residential occupants, except to lessees for a term not less than twelve months. Auctioneers' license-fees should be paid to Road Board or County Councils adjacent to towns where auctioneers' principal sales are conducted. Retained Road Boards, where the valuation exceeds £5,000, should have power to pay Chairman or Wardens the same allowance as can be paid to County Chairman and Councillors. More extended and specific powers should be given retained Road Boards as to regulation of heavy traffic. The hours for voting at elections are needlessly long, the experience of this Board being that practically no voting is done after 4 p.m.—W. RUTHERFURD, Clerk.

*Manchester Road Board.*—Manchester Road Board's valuation is upwards of £1,100,000, and it thinks that all Road Boards with valuation-roll of three-quarters of a million should be retained. The Board also thinks that the franchise should continue as at present, and be confined to ratepayers; also that Part XV., clauses 127, 138, and 139, should be made applicable to retained Road Boards.—GEO. WHEELER, Chairman.

*Mangawai Road Board.*—*Re Counties Bill:* The Mangawai Road Board disapproves of abolition of Road Boards except by desire of ratepayers, and are strongly opposed to extension of franchise.—GEO. E. FARRAND, Clerk.

*Mangawhero Road Board.*—Your telegram to hand to-day *re* the Counties Bill. I cannot possibly get a meeting of the Board, or a majority of the members, for the 21st August, but can answer for the Board and the ratepayers, that both are very anxious for the Mangawhero Road Board to be retained. Ours is a large and scattered district. The rateable value (exclusive of Crown and Native lands) is £317,625. There is a vast quantity of Crown (Tauakira and other blocks) and Native lands (Ohutu and other blocks) and blocks that are owned part by Crown and part by Native owners, the interests of which will be better looked after by resident and interested ratepayers than by a Council which will be otherwise composed of ratepayers representing well-roaded and close-settled country. At present our County (Wanganui) consists of six ridings, with a total rateable value of £1,105,781; Mangawhero Riding, rateable value £317,625, considerably more than a fourth of the whole. Ours is the only riding in the county that has not had any assistance from the county towards works of county importance, although we have just as important and necessary works of county importance to do. We have a main arterial road (will be when Crown and Native land is settled) running through our riding, and on up to Auckland and hot-lakes district. Under the existing Acts a ratepayer must be twenty-one years of age before he can exercise the local franchise. Any one seventeen years of age can take up and be the occupier of Crown lands. It appears to me that an occupier liable for rates, general and special, should be allowed a say in whom is to levy the said rates. Some more provision should be made in the case of partners. It happens that the partner whose name appears first on the roll is absent on polling-day, and though the other partner is present he cannot vote. There are also properties occupied and worked by competent managers. I think where an owner is willing to transfer the whole of his voting-power to his manager he should be allowed by law to do so.—D. MASON, Chairman.

*Mangere Road Board* (see also Conference of Local Authorities, Manukau County).—Mangere Road Board objects strongly to Road Board being abolished. Hitherto Road Board have done work empowered to do economically and well. Government statistics show costs administration 9·4 per cent. revenue, while cost of administration road districts was 8·8 per cent. Counties Bill should contain provisions for suspension of Act where local bodies favour suspending it. Object to arbitrary powers given to Governor in Council to amalgamate also boundaries of road districts. Inhabitants of district should have some voice in alterations. Object to any temporary residents having vote. Only ratepayers should have right to say how rates should be spent.—M. M. KIRKBRIDE, Chairman.

*Mangorei Road Board.*—Owing to the configuration of the land, our road district is isolated from any other. We therefore prefer to remain a separate road district as at present.—G. H. HERBERT, Chairman.

*Maraetai Road Board.*—The ratepayers of the Maraetai Road District prefer to remain as they are.—WILLIAM DUDER, Chairman.

*Marua Road Board.*—People here, including Councillors, strongly favour retaining Road Boards. Many favour abolishing Councils as being cumbersome and expensive. Boards use only half of subsidy for cost of administration, and could expend Council rates without further cost if Government takes over main roads. It would favour certain ridings, only object to change of franchise. Amalgamation undesirable here. Conditions different to the South. Better scheme to copy, education system: Make Council like Education Boards, and Road Boards like School Committees—subservient to Councils. Abolish riding. Boards only duty expend rates and elect Councillors. Council attend outside subject, deviations, valuation, collect rates.—S. HAWKINS.

*Matakohe Road Board.*—This Board strongly in favour of retention of Road Boards. Franchise should be for ratepayers only. Heavy wheel traffic regulations need to be made more workable.—E. PHEASANT.

*Mauku Road Board.*—We are not opposed to being merged in a County Council provided that the present subdivision into wards be maintained, so as to secure the expenditure of rates where collected. Ratepayers would not mind paying increased rates so much if expended where they can get the benefit. Nothing gained by dividing. Rating and expenditure between Council and Board. Amalgamating of road districts strongly objected to; also ordered in Council ratepayers should decide, or else members of the House. Road rates and subsidy not sufficient to meet increasing traffic.