

Nothing in our proposals is to in any way affect the rights or interests of any creditor of any of the dissolved Boards, if such creditor be secured by a special rate on the rateable property in any such dissolved district; nor should the ratepayers of the United Board for the time being in the area of such dissolved district be relieved from their liability to pay such special rate. The principle of our recommendation which we wish embodied in the proposed legislation is that the rights and liabilities of the old Boards up to the date of their dissolution are to be retained by the ratepayers in the area comprised in the districts of the respective Boards. No creditor is to be any better or any worse for the amalgamation, and no ratepayer to have any change in his liabilities.

SUMMARY.

From the foregoing it will be seen that your Commissioners recommend that an Act be passed by the General Assembly during its coming session, embodying the following provisions:—

1. The area described in the First Schedule hereto, and outlined on the plan attached herewith, to be a special combined drainage and river district, to be called "The Taieri Drainage District."

2. Such area to be subdivided into the six ridings as shown in the Second Schedule and on the above plan.

3. There shall be for such district a Board, under the name of "The Taieri Drainage Board"; such Board to be a body corporate, with full powers to make all kinds of contracts connected with or incident to the carrying-out of the drainage of the Taieri Plain or river-works connected therewith.

4. Such Board to have all the powers of a Drainage Board as if constituted under "The Land Drainage Act, 1904," and also all the powers of a River Board under "The River Boards Act, 1884." Except where inconsistent herewith, all the provisions of both Acts are to be incorporated as if set out at length, and in case of conflict between the provisions of the two Acts the Land Drainage Act to prevail.

5. The Board to consist of nine members, one of whom shall be elected by each of the six ridings, and three to be appointed by the Governor in Council from the Government officers stationed in the Otago District.

6. The Governor, by Order in Council, to appoint a Returning Officer and a day for the election of the first members of the Board, and upon the day of such election the following Boards (hereinafter called "the old Boards") to be dissolved: viz., the Otokia Drainage Board, the West Taieri River Board, the West Taieri Drainage Board, the Henley River Board, the Maungatua Drainage Board, and the Berwick Drainage Board.

7. The Returning Officer to prepare a ratepayers list as provided by the Land Drainage Act, with this exception—that there shall be inserted opposite the name of each occupier the total acreage of the land held by him within the district.

8. At such first and at all subsequent elections and polls of ratepayers every person whose name appears on the *corrected* list of ratepayers shall be entitled to exercise in so voting the number of votes following—that is to say, if he appears as occupier of land not exceeding 50 acres in area he shall have one vote; if he occupies over 50 acres and under 250 acres of land he shall have two votes; if he occupies more than 250 acres he shall have three votes.

9. In the event of the Board classifying the land in the district for the purpose of differential rating, those occupiers who are so classed as to pay no rates shall not be entitled to any vote.

10. At any time after the expiration of five years from the creation of the Board it may, with the consent of the Taieri and Bruce County Councils, upon such terms as may be mutually agreed upon by a two-thirds majority, pass a special resolution dissolving the Board and merging the same in the Taieri County Council, and thereupon at a date to be fixed by such resolution the Board shall become merged in the Taieri County Council; Provided that the part of the district within the Bruce County shall then come under the control of that county.

11. The Board may for the purpose of this Act levy on all lands within the district (subject, however, to classification if the Board think fit) a general rate not exceeding 4s. per acre, the fraction of an acre to count as a whole acre.

12. Where the Board levies and collects special rates already struck by any of the old Boards as security for past loans, the Board may levy and collect the same on the rateable value of the land as heretofore, but all special rates struck by the Board shall be on an acreage basis.

13. The Board, in addition to the powers of an ordinary Drainage Board and River Board, shall have full power to do all such things as may in the opinion of the Board be reasonably necessary to effectively cope with the drainage of the district, and to remedy any of the evils and losses arising from the flooding of the Taieri Plain, either from the surface waters or by floods and freshes in the Waipori and Taieri Rivers or any of their tributaries.

14. In particular, and without restricting the general powers hereby given, the Board shall have power (a) to erect or make any dam or reservoir in, about, or across the Taieri or Waipori River or any of its tributaries, and have and exercise all the powers of a River Board at any part of the said rivers or on any land anywhere in their watershed, notwithstanding that the sites of such works be outside the district; (b) to enter upon any land within the district, divert any drain, stream, or river, and close up any outlet or inlet to or from the same without payment of any compensation for loss or riparian or other water-rights.

15. If any person shall divert, take, or let into or upon any land in his occupation within the district any water from any drain, creek, stream, or river, contrary to the Board's by-laws, he shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50.

16. The Board, for the purposes of this Act, from time to time, without any poll of the ratepayers, may borrow such money, not exceeding in the whole £75,000, as it shall from time to time determine by special order; such special order to be sufficient authority for the raising of the loan, and to be binding on the Board.