



Top: A view of Redcliffs. Bottom: Launching of the "Aid", February 25, 1909.

WAYWARDEN AND TOWN BOARD CONTROL

On the tenth day of April, 1856, the Provincial Council passed a "Road Ordinance" at its sixth session. This was assented to "by His Honor the Superintendent on behalf of His Excellency the Governor" on the 26th of April in the same year, the preamble stating:

"WHEREAS it is desirable to make provision for the construction and repairing of roads and drains within the Province of Canterbury, BE IT ENACTED, etc.," then followed 43 sections containing the powers necessary for the enforcement of the provisions under the Ordinance, the Superintendent was empowered to establish road districts upon a petition from rate-payers, and an officer termed a Waywarden was to be elected under the provisions of Section 5. His duties were set out in Section 6 of the Act, Section 7 created him a corporation, he could "sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded in Law and Equity."

Rates, goods and chattels purchased from the proceeds of rates, were to be his property for the time being. He was required to keep true minutes of the meetings of ratepayers, and to account for all monies received or expended by him, but the Superintendent of the Province could either inspect or cause to be inspected his minute-book and accounts. He was responsible for the compilation of the Rate-payers' Roll.

A Returning Officer, who was appointed by the Superintendent, conducted the election of the Waywarden on the 30th December of each year and the votes were required to be recorded between the hours of "twelve and three o'clock in the afternoon."

The system of voting was provided for in Sections 19 and 20 of the Ordinance; in brief, the Returning Officer was to ask the name and place of residence of the voter, if he had already voted and then for whom he desired to vote. He was then, in the presence of the voter to write the name in a book "to be provided for the purpose."

On the 6th June following the passing of the Ordinance a Mr J. Brittan (apparently the Provincial Secretary) was appointed Returning Officer for the election of a Waywarden for the Avon and Heathcote district, and Mr Peter Kerr was declared elected on the 30th July, 1856.

The ordinances passed by the Provincial Council were repealed from time to time, and finally in 1872 the Canterbury Roads Ordinance defined the Heathcote Road District, which included Sumner.

In 1875 the provinces were abolished, and with the passing of the Counties Act in 1876, the Selwyn County was created. As it included the Heathcote Road District, Sumner thus had two parent bodies, namely, the Road Board and the County.

The Town Districts Act of 1881, which came into force on the first of January, 1882, provided the means for the next move. This took the form of a petition which stated, "that at a meeting held in Sumner on the 11th day of January, 1882, it was resolved that the area described therein" should be formed into a Town district."