

NGATORO BRIDGE.

The chairman reported that as he had always held that the deviation at the Ngatoro bridge was a mistake, he had met the ratepayers and asked them to carefully consider the matter. A meeting was held at the Dudley Road school, several members of the board being present, when a resolution was carried unanimously asking the board to make a new deviation from the new bridge direct to the Dudley Road, and when the balance of the loan was expended they would find sufficient free labor to complete the work. The factory directors were allowing them to take the land on the conditions previously arranged. The overseer had taken the permanent levels and made the plans, and Mr. Robinson had been authorized to make the survey, and he hoped to see the whole work complete at an early date.

Hon. W. Fraser, Minister of Public Works, notified Mr. H. Okey, M.P., that he had inquired into the request of the board that the vote of £200 (£ for £) for the erection of Ngatoro stream bridge should be devoted towards the cost of purchasing land and forming and metalling a road deviation, owing to the board having decided to alter the site of the bridge. The position was that the board desired to divert the road and build a ferro-concrete arch on the narrowest part of the river. The plans as submitted by the board were insufficiently strong and therefore dangerous, in some parts particularly so, and the board was therefore requested to increase the strength where necessary. The board considered this would be too expensive, and the resident engineer discussed the matter with the board's engineer, both agreeing that an iron bark timber bridge could be erected on the original line of road more economically than the amended concrete arch could be constructed on the new site. The cost of forming, metalling and fencing the deviation and paying compensation for the land would amount to about £200, with the result that there would be a worse road than formerly existed. He regretted, therefore, that he was unable to see his way to allow any portion of the item of £200 to be expended on the deviation or for subsidising the erection of the bridge, which, owing to insufficient strength, would be dangerous to traffic. It would be establishing a dangerous precedent, and would mean that the local body could erect any class of structure it desired, irrespective of whether the Department approved of the plans or not, and then utilize the Government subsidy in forming and metalling approaches. He was prepared, however,

suggesting the transfer of the vote to some other totally distinct work which both the board and the resident engineer might consider to be urgently required.

Mr. H. H. Sharp (resident engineer) wrote to similar effect, and asked the council to submit any proposals in regard to the expenditure of the £200 so that he could consider them at once.

Mr. Lawrence suggested that the money might be utilized to erect a bridge on the Bedford Road over the Ngatoroiti and Waitepuki streams, provided the settlers were prepared to raise a little money. He moved that the matter be left in the hands of the chairman and Mr. Bowler.—Carried.