

It certainly appears to me that the advocates of the Railway, who advance many undeniable generalities as to the advantages of Railways, do not succeed, when they set themselves to measure in figures those of the one proposed, in shewing that the latter are an equivalent for what must be set off against them—viz., the large original outlay, the cost of working the Railway, and keeping it in repair, and the payment of so large an annual interest on the borrowed capital. With every disposition to take a hopeful view of the matter, and to admit the correctness of the estimates of the extent and value of the lands to be made accessible, formed by those most favorable to the project, I cannot think that it has yet been shewn that there is much probability that the increase of revenue of any kind to be produced by the Railway would for many years equal the interest that would have to be paid on the Loan. But surely, unless this could be satisfactorily shewn, Government would not be justified by any representations, however forcible, of the general results of Railways in other countries, under different circumstances, in saddling so large a debt upon the people of Nelson. If, indeed, the Provincial Government had other revenues of its own, amply sufficient to guarantee its ability to meet this additional liability, the case would be different. But, apart from the revenue, direct or indirect, to arise from the Railway, and an approximation to what, at all events, ought to be attainable in figures, it does not appear that the Province of Nelson has any revenue sufficient for this purpose.

If there be any reasonable ground for these conclusions, then I think it must be admitted that, if a debt of such magnitude is to be saddled on the Province, other ways of spending Three hundred thousand pounds to its more immediate and greater advantage might probably be devised. If anything like that sum, for instance, were judiciously expended in due proportion for the introduction of immigrants, and the making the districts best adapted for immediate settlement easily accessible from the natural outlets for the produce of such districts, I believe the benefit to the Province, as a whole, would be incomparably greater.

If the main object, however, is to prevent the possible separation of the Western portion of the Province from Nelson, by making Nelson the outlet for the produce of the Buller and Grey districts, I do not think there is any evidence to show that such a reversal of the ordinary results of the natural configuration of the country could be brought about by this or any other Railway.

The Government, therefore, have no hesitation in acceding to Your Honor's request that no decision in favor of this project should be come to until an opportunity has been afforded for acquiring the additional information alluded to by Your Honor, especially as the influx of a large body of gold-diggers would most materially alter the whole aspect of the question.

I need scarcely say, in conclusion, that the fact of the nearly equal decision of opinion in the Provincial Council, and, apparently, in the public, of Nelson for and against this scheme, is a strong confirmation of the prudence of adopting the course suggested by Your Honor.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOMETT.

His Honor the Superintendent, Nelson.

No. 3.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, NELSON, TO THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Superintendent's Office,
Nelson, 17th November, 1862.

SIR,—

Wangapeka Coal Fields
Railway.

A reference to the report prepared by Mr. Burnett, Colliery Engineer, who has been for a considerable time, and still is engaged in examining that portion of the Grey Coal Field lying near the Buller River, a copy of which, with plans illustrative thereof, I had the honor to transmit to you by the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Poynter, on his late visit to Wellington, will shew that in order to reduce the cost of conveying the Coals from the Mine to the place of shipment to the lowest possible amount, it will be necessary to construct a tramway; for the purpose of defraying the cost of which, working the Mines, and carrying on other necessary operations connected therewith, it is estimated that a capital of Fifty-thousand Pounds may be required.

In order that no delay may arise in working the mines and bringing the Coal to market, it is proposed that this Government should commence the required works, and if necessary, carry them on until a suitable company may be found willing to do so on terms mutually advantageous to themselves and the Public.

In order to the accomplishment of these objects, I have to request that you will be good enough to inform me at your earliest convenience, whether the Government will be prepared to advise His Excellency the Governor to give his assent to an Act for raising by loan the sum of, say, Fifty thousand Pounds, should the Provincial Council pass such an Act.

I have, &c.,

J. P. ROBINSON,
Superintendent.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.