

lying between Christchurch and Woodend, a distance of about 12 miles, I have allowed the supply of a few red birch posts. The posts on this section of the line were supplied at a low rate, namely, 25s. per post, delivered along the line. * * * * *

EXTRACT from Specification for supply and delivery of 250 posts for line from Christchurch to Woodend:—

“The posts to be 25 feet long, 8 inches square at the one end, and six inches square at the other, to be of red or black birch and pine.” * * * *

A. SHEATH.

Copy of letter from the SECRETARY to the General Post Office, to Mr. SHEATH.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 1st February, 1865.

I am instructed to inform you that when the Postmaster-General was at Picton at the early part of last month, he observed a large quantity of posts ready for shipment for some port of Canterbury, which were not apparently 8 inches square at the bottom. They were not squared nor free from sap; nor of the heart of the wood.

I have, &c.,

G. ELIOTT ELIOTT.

Extract of letter from the SECRETARY to the General Post Office to Mr. SHEATH.

SIR,—

Wellington, 3rd February, 1865.

I have to inform you that your communication of the 25th ult. does not supply all the information desired with reference to the posts furnished for the line of Telegraph, and I am to request you to report the names and descriptions, and probable quantities, of each of the different varieties of wood which are being used for this purpose. Each division of the line to be reported on separately.

Extract of letter from Mr. SHEATH to the Honorable the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 24rd February, 1865.

In reply to your letter of the 1st instant I have to inform you that Mr. Varley is now out inspecting the posts between Nelson and the Hurunui. I have received a letter from him dated 1st February, and he writes me as follows from Hawkswood:—“Most of the poles are laid down on the ground; they are, as far as I have seen, fully up to the thickness. I have been examining some black birch poles which have been standing three years, they are burnt and tarred; they are as sound as new. The black birch contains a great deal of heart, and I believe a good wood. There is almost no other wood in this country than black birch; I have, therefore, passed them. In fact, I believe we shall find that they are much better than manuka.” * * * *

With testimony such as this I really think the Government will be satisfied with the quality of the posts laid down. * * * *

In conclusion, I beg to say that I have examined black birch that has undergone very severe tests, and I must pronounce myself satisfied with the results. I have also taken the opinions of gentlemen that have used it, and have been assured of its excellent qualities for any purpose. * * *

Extract of letter from Mr. SHEATH to the Honorable the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Christchurch, February 24th, 1865.

In reply to your letter, of 3rd instant, I will take up the different parts of the enclosed letter published in the “Lyttelton Times” of the 31st January.

In the first place, the writer of the letter expresses surprise at the employment of birch saplings, which he asserts cannot certainly last more than three years.

As I am not acquainted with the name of the writer, I am not able to judge whether he is capable of forming an opinion on the subject; but Mr. Varley's evidence, produced in my letter of this date, would certainly go far to prove that he is not * * *

With regard to the selection of the line, I have chosen the route best calculated to afford us the least inconvenience—in an Electric and Telegraphic point of view—and should it be a little more expensive on this account, it is my opinion that a temporary rather than a permanent sacrifice should be adopted. Should the fears of the writer as to timber be borne out, I think it probable that I should, at a future period, recommend the adoption of iron posts to supply the place of the perishing timber; but this is not certain.

Copy of letter from the SECRETARY to the General Post Office, to Mr. SHEATH.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, March 18th, 1865.

With reference to your letter (January 25th, 1865,) noted in the margin, I am directed to call upon you to furnish this Department with a copy of the instructions referred to by you, authorising you to use saplings for the electric poles.

I have, &c.,

G. ELIOTT ELIOTT.