

PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED NELSON AND COBDEN RAILWAY.

No. 1.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Wellington, to SUPERINTENDENT, Nelson.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington,
25th October, 1869.

SIR,—

The Government have observed with regret a statement in the Nelson newspapers to the effect that the negotiations for the construction of the Nelson West Coast Railway authorized by the Provincial Government of Nelson to be entered upon in England, have not been successful.

It has occurred to the Colonial Government that the Commissioners, who are about to be sent to England on behalf of the Colony, may be in a position to assist in promoting your railway. Recognizing, as the Colonial Government do, its importance, both from a Provincial and also a Colonial point of view, the Government have great pleasure in offering to instruct the Commissioners, should you desire it, to ascertain whether anything can be done in the matter. Should difficulties exist at present, it is probable that the Commissioners may be able to come to some arrangement by which, with the approval and aid of the General Assembly, such difficulties may be overcome.

I have, &c.,
W. GISBORNE.

His Honor the Superintendent, Nelson.

No. 2.

The SUPERINTENDENT, Nelson, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Wellington.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Nelson, 30th October, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, in which you offer on the part of the Colonial Government to instruct the Commissioners about to be sent to England on behalf of the Colony to assist in overcoming the difficulties which at present exist in reference to the Nelson and Cobden Railway.

I beg to thank the Government earnestly and sincerely for their offer of assistance in this matter, of which I shall gladly avail myself.

By the next opportunity I will write fully on the subject, and make such suggestions as occur to me as to the manner in which the services of the Commissioners might be most advantageously rendered.

I have, &c.,
OSWALD CURTIS,
Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

No. 3.

The SUPERINTENDENT, Nelson, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Wellington.

SIR,—

Wellington, 19th November, 1869.

In further reference to your letter of the 25th October, in which you are good enough to offer the assistance of the Commissioners about to proceed to England in the removal of the difficulties which exist with regard to the proposed railway from Nelson to Cobden and Westport, I have the honor to suggest that the Commissioners should be instructed to communicate with Mr. John Morrison, who has been intrusted with the negotiation of the matter by the Provincial Government, and has been furnished with a power of attorney under the provisions of "The Nelson and Cobden Railway Act, 1868."

For the information of the Commissioners, I forward to you herewith copies of the correspondence which has hitherto passed upon the subject, from which it will be seen that, although the project has received favourable attention from several gentlemen of rank and influence, who at one time were sanguine as to the practicability of carrying it into execution, later advices show that there is no immediate probability of such a result being arrived at.

There can however be little doubt, from the general tenor of the correspondence, that the necessary capital would be at once forthcoming upon the Colonial guarantee being given of a moderate rate of interest upon the sum expended, and that the introduction of a considerable number of valuable immigrants might be secured at the same time. Colonel Maude's proposals include the shipment of 2000 labourers with their wives and families, to be settled upon a block of land in the Grey District; and looking to the large amount of employment for labour which the construction of the line would provide, I am inclined to believe that a larger number might be introduced as the work progressed, with benefit to the Colony and to themselves.

The cost of the line is estimated by Mr. Wrigg at about £900,000; by other engineers, who have examined Mr. Wrigg's calculations, at more—nearly £1,350,000. Interest guaranteed upon the sum of £1,500,000, at the rate of 5 per cent. would amount to £75,000 per annum.

Presuming that 3,000 labourers with their wives and families were introduced, the addition to the population of the Colony might be taken to be 15,000 persons, whose contribution to the Colonial revenue at the present average per head would amount to about £60,000 per annum.