

With the consent of the Provincial Council I should be willing, on the part of the Province, to hand over to the Colonial Government the land proposed to be granted in consideration of the construction of the railway, about 2,200,000 acres, which, under the scheme I am now suggesting, would no longer be required for that purpose, by way of security for their guarantee.

But I should not be prepared, looking to the present available resources of the Province, to recommend to the Provincial Council to become otherwise responsible for so large an annual sum as £75,000; although I trust there would be little fear that the Government would be called upon for anything like that amount, after the first year or two at all events.

If the Government is of opinion that the suggestions I now make are worthy of their consideration on the part of the Colony, I am convinced that, subject to such modifications as the inquiries of the Commissioners may show to be desirable, and with the assent of the General Assembly, they may be carried into effect to the great benefit of the Colony as a whole, as well as more especially the Province which I have the honor to represent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

OSWALD CURTIS.

No. 4.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the NEW ZEALAND COMMISSIONERS, London.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington,

27th November, 1869.

GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honor to enclose copies of the correspondence which has taken place between the Government and His Honor the Superintendent of the Province of Nelson in reference to the removal of the difficulties which exist with regard to the proposed railway from Nelson to Cobden and Westport.

I have the honor to request you to be good enough when in England to make inquiries into this matter, with a view to ascertaining what steps can be taken to remove those difficulties, and to promote what the Government recognize as an object of colonial importance, the formation of the railway in question.

While the Government would be glad to learn that you were successful in the attainment of this object, they cannot authorize you to commit the Colony to any expenditure or responsibility on this account, and they cannot undertake to recommend to the House of Representatives to give a guarantee of the kind referred to by the Superintendent—unless possibly as a part of a general scheme for railways which the Government may hereafter decide to recommend to the Legislature, a subject to which it is directing its attention.

The Honbles. I. E. Featherston and F. D. Bell.

W. GISBORNE.

Enclosure 1 in No. 4.

The SUPERINTENDENT, Nelson to JOHN MORRISON, Esq., London.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Nelson, 2nd January, 1869.

I have the honor to forward to you herewith your appointment as Agent for this Province in England, under the provisions of "The Nelson and Cobden Railway Act, 1868," with full power and authority to enter into a contract for the construction of a line of railway from Nelson to Cobden and Westport, upon the terms and conditions specified in the Act.

I have to request that you will take such steps as you may think desirable to bring the subject under the notice of capitalists in London, and that you will do all in your power to obtain the execution of a work so highly calculated to promote the prosperity of this Province, as well as of the whole Colony of New Zealand.

You will receive, according to advices sent you last month by the Panama steamer, a case, containing a map of the Province, showing the watershed of the valleys referred to in the Act, and within which the land to be granted is contained.

The map exhibits other particulars illustrative of the character of the country, which are chiefly derived from actual survey, and are otherwise as accurate and reliable as the best sources of information at our command would enable them to be made,

The case also contains complete tracings of Mr Wrigg's survey, together with a number of printed reports and Council papers relative to the district through which the proposed railway would pass; amongst which is the Report of a Committee of the Provincial Council, appointed in 1863, to consider the question of inland communication in reference to the West Coast District, with the evidence upon which that report was founded.

You will observe that the project mooted, and to which this report refers, contemplated but a small portion of the line surveyed by Mr. Wrigg, and that the report of the Committee was drawn before the discovery of the important gold fields now in operation upon the West Coast, both in the Province of Nelson and the adjoining County of Westland.

You will also observe that the estimates of Mr. Wrigg, Mr. Burnett and others, of the quantity of available agricultural land within the Grey and Buller Valleys differ to some extent, but not more so than might be expected in a country which is even yet, comparatively speaking, unexplored. But, as the main value of the land is obviously in its mineral deposits, the matter is not one of much importance.

The land, it may be well to remark, is not offered in payment for the construction of the line, which will remain the property of the company constructing it, but rather by way of guarantee of interest or dividend to be derived from the proceeds of its sale or rental, and perhaps more immediately from royalties upon its minerals, levied mainly in the first instance from gold-miners' rights. The first proceeds of land sales would probably arise from the sale of townships upon gold fields upon or near the line of railway.