

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO

No. 9.

From Hon. Mr. REEVES to his Honor the SUPERINTENDENT.

Office of Resident Minister for the Middle Island, N Z.,
Christchurch, 4th April 1872.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, in which you request my reconsideration of all that has passed between us both at a personal interview and the correspondence in regard to the terms of payment of the Provincial contribution towards the Canterbury Branch Railways.

The reasons given by you for this request are, that my recollection of what passed at our interview does not agree with your own, or that of the Provincial Secretary, or with your notes of the interview, or with the correspondence that has subsequently taken place.

While I shall have great pleasure in acceding to your Honor's request, I may be permitted to observe that all the facts adduced in support of your request are quite compatible with the position I hold in respect to the payments in question.

The misapprehension which exists between your Government and myself turns entirely on the point—whether I consented that the General Government should make proportional payments from the commencement of the works and before the Provincial contribution was exhausted. In imagining that I agreed to this your Honor is altogether mistaken; and I can only account for the impression entertained by yourself and Mr. Kennaway by the supposition that you confounded my agreement to take progress payments from the Province with the notion that I had agreed to accept proportional payments. The fact that your notes bear out your impression merely proves, what I have no wish to dispute, that such was your impression. The inference which you desire to draw from a formal official acknowledgement of the resolution of Council—that I approved and endorsed the terms of the resolution—is one I am not prepared to admit, and the quotation from Mr. Maude's letter, which is used for the same end, admits, in my opinion, of no other conclusion than one favourable to my views.

In order to show how very improbable it is that I could have agreed to the mode of payment you desire, I beg to remind your Honor of the main circumstances attending this transaction from the commencement of the arrangement with the General Government. Towards the close of last Session when the list of Main Railways on the Schedule had swelled to something like its present proportions, it was determined to expunge all the Branch Railways from the Schedule, for financial reasons, and relegate them to another Session. It was then that some of the Canterbury Members suggested the plan of tempting the Ministry to undertake the Canterbury Branch Lines, with the bait of a Provincial contribution, which had been already partly appropriated, and which would in all probability be increased if the arrangement was effected. The Government, as you are aware, took this bait, and carried the Branch Lines successfully through the House. The inference is clear that this would not have been done had not they believed that the Provincial contribution was immediately forthcoming.

That this was the view of the Government after the Session I have already told your Honor in the interview before alluded to, when I expressly stated that I was charged to obtain the whole amount of the contribution as a preliminary to proceeding with the works, and it was only at the urgent solicitation of your Honor that I consented to waive this demand and take upon myself to accept progress payments. It is hardly probable therefore that I could have contemplated the bare idea of making proportional payments on account of the General Government from the commencement of the works.

As my earnest desire is to promote these works, and as this result may be assisted by a personal interview to discuss the question, I beg to state that I shall be happy to meet your Honor at any time and place you may appoint.

I have, &c.,

W. REEVES.

No. 10.

From Mr. KENNAWAY to Mr. MAUDE.

The Provincial Government Buildings, 9th April, 1872.

In accordance with the request of the Honorable the Resident Minister, I forward a copy of the memo. of what was determined in the interview his Honor the Superintendent and myself had with him on the 5th instant.

W. KENNAWAY.

Enclosure in No. 10.

MEMORANDUM OF INTERVIEW.

Present—His Honor the Superintendent, the Honorable the Resident Minister, and the Provincial Secretary.

Mode of payment of the contribution from the Provincial Government towards the construction of Branch Railways:—

1. It was understood that the General Government decline to make any payment on account of any of the Branch Lines until the amount of the Provincial contribution has been exhausted.

2. That it is the intention of the General Government to commence the several lines as simultaneously as circumstances will permit, in accordance with the resolution of the Provincial Council.