

Enclosure 2 in No. 30.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. C. T. BATKIN.

THE signature of the Provincial Auditor to cheques drawn on the Road Boards Account is a condition which has been imposed in the interest of the Road Boards as a whole, and is necessary to enable the Provincial Auditor to exercise that effectual control which the Act evidently intended he should have, but for which it made very insufficient provision; for, while the Act imposes on the Auditor a penalty of £500 for wilfully certifying any warrant except in accordance with its provisions, it permits the Road Boards Account at the Bank to be operated on by the cheque of the Provincial Treasurer, countersigned by the Chairman of any one Road Board.

The Provincial Treasurer states, in the concluding paragraph of his letter, that the advances made by the Province to the respective Road Boards can be proved by vouchers certified by the Provincial Auditor. This being the case, there would probably be no objection on the part of that officer to certify accounts in favour of the Provincial Treasurer for reimbursement of the sums advanced, and to sign the corresponding cheques. These cheques would require, under the Act, the counter-signature of the Chairman of the respective Road Boards, who could scarcely object to refunding to the Province sums which had been paid to them in anticipation of the amounts accruing to them under the Payments to Provinces Act.

The question as to the refund appears to me to rest entirely between the Provincial Government, the Provincial Auditor, and the Chairman of the Board to whom the advances were made.

The Provincial Treasurer states that, on the faith of a continuance of the subsidies paid to the Road Boards by the Colony, the Province has made certain advances which it desires to recover through the intervention of the Colonial Government. Those subsidies have been continued, but neither under the former nor under the present Act could they be expended without the certificate of the Provincial Auditor; for, whatever expenditure that officer could certify, he could not reasonably refuse to countersign a cheque, and thus the condition imposed creates no additional difficulty.

The counter-signature of the Chairman is a requirement of the Act, and the Colonial Government has no power to authorize its being dispensed with, or to interfere in any way in the withdrawal from the Bank of the moneys passed to the credit of the Road Boards Account.

C. T. BATKIN,  
Paymaster-General.

Treasury, Wellington, 1st February, 1872.

Enclosure 3 in No. 30.

Mr. J. B. BRADSHAW to the Hon. W. REEVES.

SIR,—

Provincial Treasury, Dunedin, 30th January, 1872.

With reference to my letter of the 25th instant, in respect to Road Boards subsidy, I have now the honor to request that you will be good enough to cause the conditions prescribed in "The Payments to Provinces Act, 1871," in so far as Road Boards in this Province are concerned, to be waived, in accordance with the 14th clause of the said Act.

"The Payments to Provinces Act, 1871," provides that Road Boards shall be divided into classes. This cannot be done without considerable difficulty and delay.

The Provincial Government, believing that the Road Board subsidy would be paid by the Colony to the Province in the usual manner, made advances to existing Road Boards, amounting to over £6,000. The Boards held their annual meetings about the 1st of July last; and precepts are issued for raising rates on the understanding that £1 for every £1 raised by the respective Boards would be paid by the Government by way of subsidy.

Any alteration in the amount of subsidy would be a breach of faith, and cause considerable annoyance not only to the Provincial Government but to the country districts generally.

I would, therefore, suggest that the present mode of payment and subsidy to Road Boards be continued till the year ending 30th June, 1872; and that, if it be found practicable, the classification be introduced after that date.

I have, &c.,

J. B. BRADSHAW,  
Provincial Treasurer.

The Hon. W. Reeves, Resident Minister.

Enclosure 4 in No. 30.

Mr. T. W. MAUDE to Mr. J. B. BRADSHAW.

Office of the Resident Minister for the Middle Island,  
Dunedin, 13th February, 1872.

SIR,—

I have the honor, by the direction of Mr. Reeves, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo, in which you refer to the payment by the Government of a sum of £6,779 6s. 10d. to the credit of the "Road Boards Account," the account indicated in section 16 and 17 of "The Payments to Provinces, Act, 1871," and setting forth that, owing to certain previous arrangements, the Road Boards have already received a sum of £6,412 10s. 10d. from the Provincial chest, in anticipation of a grant from the Colony for that purpose, and that, therefore, under the circumstances, you request that a refund may be made to the Provincial Treasury