

forwarded, ordered under Public Works Memorandum No. 53, of the 25th November, 1871, and No. 24, of the 23rd January, 1872.

It will be observed that the number of miles of rails shipped is 119½, making with the shipment for the Dunedin and Clutha Railway, completed in July last, 138 miles in all.

Owing to the difficulties experienced by manufacturers incident to the frequent strikes that have occurred among their workmen, and against which no provision can be made, the Engineers were unable to enforce my instructions to forward the requisite fastenings with each shipment of rails, but they lead me to suppose that the quantities sent will be sufficient to meet the necessary requirements.

With regard to the rolling stock ordered under Memorandum 24, of the 23rd January, 1872, it will be completed by contract time, and I hope to ship it in the course of this and the following month.

The three locomotives that are being constructed by Messrs. Stephenson and Co. are in a forward state, and the Consulting Engineers advise me that they expect them to be ready for shipment next month. They also report that Messrs. Neilson are not likely to be so prompt in the delivery of the ten smaller.

Of the ninety-two miles of materials ordered under Public Works Memorandum No. 78, 1872, dated 9th June, 1872, 2,000 tons of rails are in course of being rolled by Messrs. Wm. Whitwell and Co., and 600 tons will be ready for shipment by the 28th of this month. To convey these to Lyttelton, and the balance of the 350 tons yet to be delivered by Messrs. Hopper, Radcliffe, and Co., under Memorandum No. 24, I intend chartering a ship.

You have already been advised of the tenders I had accepted for the locomotives, switches, and crosses, and fastenings; and I beg to state that on the 18th instant I will decide the contracts for the carriages, waggon, &c.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington,
New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.

(For enclosed Tabular Statements, see pp. 4 and 5.)

No. 6.

CABLEGRAM from the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

London, 7th February.

CONTRACTORS wont be bound in penalties with strikes. They can complete within time. Full particulars existing contracts already sent. Instructions made absolute will be rigidly adhered to. All orders will be put in hand immediately, but Welsh ironmasters being prevented by strikes tendering, Government will have to pay increased rates. Instructions respecting ordering one hundred thousand worth of Brogden's commission plant conflicting—your instructions order plant immediately, Wellington instructions execute order as early as state of market will permit: which instructions am I to obey? Your instructions, by reason of absence of Welsh competitors, will probably entail loss of many thousands. Are three locomotives Waitaki cylinder sent in "Palmerston" to be ordered again? Where are locomotives promised in contract in April, and other rolling stock, to be first sent to? * * *

FEATHERSTON.

No. 7.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

21st February, 1873.

SIR,—

Referring to Public Works Memorandum 130-72, of the 19th December, 1872, in which I am informed that, from inquiry in various quarters, it is found that dead weight is brought out at lower rates than those paid to Messrs. Shaw, Saville, and Co., I have to thank the Government for calling my attention to it, of which I was not previously aware.

As regards direct shipments, whenever it is practicable I invariably send material in that way; any exception has been when I could not ship other than indirectly. For the future, I shall comply with your wishes, and ship only in direct vessels, leaving it to the Government to tranship when the plant is required at an out-port.

The rails ordered for Greymouth under Memorandum No. 53, of the 25th November, 1871, were forwarded in the ships "Asterope," "Chaudière," "Joyce Philips," "Forfarshire," and "Echo." They were sent to Nelson, being the nearest port, as no vessel would discharge cargo at Greymouth.

Insurances have been effected upon a standing order given during the time Mr. Morrison acted for the Government in the Office of the New Zealand Insurance Company, and upon which order I have continued to act.

The rate of 40s. is nominal, for it is subject to a return of 9s. 6d. per cent. on direct, and 4s. 9d. per cent. on indirect shipments; but with the view to obtain the best possible terms, I will institute inquiries as to securing more favourable rates.

I note that it is desired that the carriages and locomotives are to be insured against all risks. I am doubtful whether it can be done, unless by paying excessive premiums. I will, however, give attention to the subject, and use my best endeavours to comply with the instructions.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington,
New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
I. E. FEATHERSTON,
Agent-General.