

In reply, I have to state that the question is still under the consideration of the Marine Department, and that it will yet be some little time before a definite answer can be sent to your Honor. This delay is occasioned by the whole of the Marine Staff having been, and still being, engaged in lighthouse business.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
WILLIAM H. REYNOLDS.

No. 11.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 13th June, 1874.

Referring to your Honor's letter of the 11th April, on the subject of the grant of forty-eight acres, more or less, in the bed of the Wanganui River, which your Honor had recommended should be made to the Mayor, Councillors, and citizens of the Borough of Wanganui, for the purposes of reclamation, and to form part of the estate of the Corporation, and to my reply of the 14th April, I have now the honor to inform you that since Mr. Blackett's return to Wellington he has reported to the Government that it would be premature to give any rights over the foreshore of the Wanganui River, pending the decision as to what direction the branch line of railway to the Town of Wanganui will take from the main line, as, from the position selected for the railway bridge over the river, it is highly probable that from that point, or near it, a branch line will be made to the town, about a mile and three-quarters distant. This consideration, Mr. Blackett points out, should also influence the manner in which the reclaimed land in front of the town should be laid out for buildings, as, should the branch line be made to connect with the shipping, as it almost certainly will be, a considerable space, both as to length and breadth will be required for a railway station; and he recommends that until the Government are in possession of sufficient information on this head in detail, it would be well to reserve all rights now held by them over the foreshore in question. The force of Mr. Blackett's representations will, the Government feel assured, be at once recognized by your Honor, and you will perceive that, in the face of those representations, the Government cannot recommend His Excellency to make an unconditional grant of the land applied for. Independently, however, of the objections referred to, there is another one of a weightier character against an unconditional grant being made of so large a portion of the foreshore as that which you recommend. It has been pointed out to the Government that any reclamation at Wanganui, if not carried out on a well-considered plan, would certainly have the effect of seriously damaging the harbour.

The Marine Engineer, to whom this question was referred, has expressed his opinion that the amount of reclamation proposed is too great, and that, if carried out, it would encroach prejudicially on the present limits of the water-way; and he has prepared a plan (tracing of which is enclosed herein) showing what lines the reclamation (if any) should take. Mr. Blackett strongly urges that any reclamation should be carried out as a whole, commencing from up river above the town, and not by piecemeal from time to time, for local purposes, as any isolated piece of reclamation—although it might be a part of a well-devised plan for the whole—which would have square or bluff abutments to the river bank, would divert the river current, and cause alterations in the channel, and probably serious damage. It has been further strongly urged on the Government, that whatever reclamation may be permitted to be done, there should be a stipulation that a public thoroughfare should be reserved on the river side, along the entire length of the land reclaimed. The Government entirely concur in the views and opinions expressed above, and will, accordingly, only be prepared to recommend that a grant be made to the municipality of Wanganui of part of the foreshore of the river, as shown in the tracing transmitted herewith, subject to the reservation of so much of it as may be required for the projected branch railway and stations, such grant to be subject to conditions similar to those contained in section 3 of the Wanganui River foreshore grant of last Session, as to plans and specifications of works being submitted to the Governor in Council for approval, and as to owners of land injuriously affected by such works being entitled to compensation; and, further, that the mode of carrying out any reclamation or other works connected therewith shall be subject to the control and approval of the Engineer-in-Chief and the Marine Engineer, or other officers who may be appointed by the Government to supervise the plan and execution of such reclamation or other works.

I desire to add, that the Government regret that so much delay has arisen in dealing with this question. This delay was caused, in the first instance, through no proper plan having been supplied to the Government, showing the exact position and extent of the land applied for until the middle of March; and, afterwards, through the rather protracted absence of the Marine Engineer from Wellington, on duty connected with the Marine and Public Works Departments.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
WILLIAM H. REYNOLDS.

No. 12.

His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 16th June, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, No. 209, on the subject of the grant of forty-eight acres, more or less, in the bed of the Wanganui River, to the Mayor, Councillors, and citizens of the Borough of Wanganui, for the purpose of reclamation.

In reply, I beg to inform you that I have forwarded a copy of your letter and tracing to His Worship the Mayor, and so soon as I receive his reply I will communicate with you further.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,
Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.