

## No. 13.

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

SIR,— Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 15th July, 1874.

Referring to your letter of the 13th June last, and to my reply thereto of the 16th of the same month, on the subject of the grant of the foreshore of the Wanganui River to the Mayor, Councillors, and Citizens of the Borough of Wanganui, I have now the honor to enclose copy of a letter I have received from His Worship the Mayor, dated 10th July, 1874; and I invite your careful consideration of the arguments urged therein.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,

Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

## Enclosure in No. 13.

His Worship the MAYOR, Wanganui, to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington.

SIR,— Borough Council Office, Wanganui, 10th July, 1874.

In reply to your letter of the 16th June, enclosing a copy of one from the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Reynolds) of 13th June last, I have the honor to inform you that after it had been duly considered by the Borough Council, the following resolution was agreed to:—

“That the Mayor acknowledge the receipt of His Honor's letter, and state that the Council concurs with the view expressed in the Colonial Secretary's communication enclosed therein.”

As, however, it is difficult to express in a single sentence all that the Council wishes to be taken into consideration by the General Government and yourself with regard to the rather complex subjects discussed in the Colonial Secretary's letter, I suggested that a letter should be drafted by myself and forwarded to your Honor, if approved of by the Council. This proposal was agreed to; in pursuance of which I now call your attention to the points in the Colonial Secretary's communication which, in the interests of the town and district of Wanganui, seem to demand the exercise of the greatest care on the part of both the Provincial and General Governments before action is taken.

The Corporation is of course anxious to secure to the town as large an acreage of the foreshore as possible, recognizing, as it does, that judiciously executed reclamation will render this a very valuable property. At the same time it is fully aware that to gain this at the expense of the port would be a fatal error. To this extent, then, the Corporation fully agrees with the General Government, but nevertheless trusts that care will be taken that the margin allowed for safety is not needlessly large. I submit that there is risk of such a mistake being made—a mistake on the right side, no doubt, but still a mistake—if the plan forwarded has been hastily decided on without a careful professional examination on the spot of all the physical facts and all the conflicting interests involved.

Connected with the port and river navigation, is the question of quay frontage, which the Corporation concurs with the Colonial Secretary in thinking should be preserved as a public thoroughfare, as indeed is indicated in the plan of the proposed reclamation prepared by the Borough Engineer, and forwarded to your Honor in January last. In reference to this, I desire to point out the advantage it would be to the town, if the grant was made so as to include as great a depth of water on the river frontage as possible, not arbitrarily limited to three feet, or any other measure, (as in the Schedule to “The Wanganui River Foreshore Grant Act, 1873,”) but being left merely contingent on such lines as, in the opinion of qualified persons, would give the town the maximum area of foreshore consistent with preserving the port from injury.

The Corporation sees the mischief that might arise if reclamation were carried on piecemeal, but hopes that as much latitude will be given in this respect as the facts will justify. It is evident that the value of the property to be granted to the Corporation would be seriously depreciated if conditions were needlessly attached to it which would render it impossible to utilize it for many years, for want of sufficient funds.

With regard to the railway, it is so evidently of the last importance to the town that it should be connected with the main lines, that the Corporation entirely agrees with the Colonial Secretary as to the necessity there is for reserving to the Government full power to use any public land required in connection with it. While writing on this subject, I take the opportunity of asking your Honor to urge the General Government to push on the Wanganui-Waitara Railway from this end of the line. Of its political importance, as affecting the Native question, you are well aware, and commercially it is of equal consequence to both town and country. Even without a railway, and with but a short period of peace, the settled district between Wanganui and Mount Egmont has progressed, both in wealth and population, more rapidly than any other part of the North Island, while with one, many resources, now lying dormant, would be utilized. Taken in conjunction with the river improvements, which I confidently anticipate will shortly be undertaken by the Provincial Government, the produce which the northern and southern lines of railway would, from the very first, pour into Wanganui in exchange for imports, would develop a trade which would not only enormously increase local and provincial prosperity, but would add materially to the colonial revenue.

Having regard to all the circumstances affecting the grant of the foreshore to this municipality, I cannot but think that, if the General Government is not in possession of sufficient data to enable it to decide finally on the area and boundaries of the grant, these should be obtained before it is made. Should there not be time to do this effectually, or if from any other cause it should be found impossible to make immediately any but the grant with its attached conditions (all perfectly fair and reasonable as safeguards of general, local, and private interest) proposed in paragraph six (6) of the Colonial Secretary's letter, and defined in the plan sent therewith, then I think the interests of the borough would be best consulted by leaving it to your discretion to delay taking further action.

In thus leaving the matter in your hands, the Corporation relies implicitly on the good faith of the General and Provincial Governments, feeling sure that, while local requirements are properly subordinated to those of a more general character, the former will not be lost sight of, and that if the municipality does not obtain all it expected, it will have all that it can justly claim, and be dealt with fairly and liberally throughout.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT PHABAZYN,

Mayor.

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.