

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

MEMORANDUM BY MR. PASSMORE

ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON RAILWAY MANAGEMENT.

Laid on the Table 14th August by Hon. Mr. Ormond, and ordered to be printed 21st August, 1877.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Wellington, 10th January, 1877.

YESTERDAY I signed the Report on the Management of the New Zealand Railways under protest, as, although there is much in the report that I thoroughly agree with, I think I should be wanting in my duty to the Government as well as to myself, if I neglected to protest against the upsetting of a system of account that is found to be simple in practice, and which provides everything required for a very strict audit, and the substitution in its place of a system much more complicated and expensive—I refer to the accounts to be rendered for passenger and goods traffic, the latter especially.

I would point out that on the Commission, three of the members had adopted the English system of account, and that I was alone in advocating the adoption of a more simple practice.

Great stress is laid in paragraph 29, on the fact that the English system is used in Otago and Canterbury, and that, as there is a larger business done there than anywhere else in the colony, therefore it will be better to retain the system, *independently of the actual merits of the two systems*.

I beg respectfully to point out that such a line of argument is faulty, and I would submit that it does not at all follow because the system is in force in England that it is a good one. In England the system has grown year by year from the time when each passenger had to give his name and destination in order to receive a written ticket, up to the present time. As the traffic increased extra forms were found to be necessary, and had to be made to dovetail into existing forms. These additions from time to time grew to the present gigantic proportions, when it is almost an impossibility to make any radical change.

In New Zealand the case is quite different. We have the experience of other railways before us; and I submit that it is a wrong practice to be tied by any existing scheme if we can devise one more simple, at the same time retaining equal efficiency, and providing a thorough check.

I think if the Commission had carried out my suggestion and visited one of my lines, and seen the system in actual practice, they might have modified their views.

I claim that my system is far more simple than the one proposed; that it is therefore cheaper to carry out; that it provides a thorough check of accounts with which the Audit is perfectly satisfied; and that the system applies equally to a line of 500 miles in length as it does to one of 10 miles long.

I respectfully request that this letter may be appended to the report.

FRANK B. PASSMORE,

Member of the Commission appointed to inquire into and report on the
Management of New Zealand Railways.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBUXY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1877.