

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

LOCATION OF COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS' OFFICE IN THE MIDDLE ISLAND

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives with the leave of the House.

No. 1.

The SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.
SIR,—

Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, 25th July, 1879.

At the last meeting of this Chamber the following resolution was unanimously passed—namely :—

“That, the object for which the Commissioner of Railways for the South Island was temporarily removed to Christchurch—namely, the effecting of certain improvements for the better carrying out of traffic on the Canterbury lines—having been attained, this Chamber is strongly of opinion that the Commissioner should now be permanently settled in Dunedin.”

In order to lay before you more fully the strong reasons which exist for preferring the request indicated in this resolution, the members of the Chamber have joined in a memorial which I this day transmit to Mr. R. Oliver, M.H.R., with a request that he will present it on our behalf.

The Committee feel confident that an investigation of the circumstances will induce in your mind a conviction of the reasonableness and propriety of the change now asked for.

The Hon. J. Macandrew, Minister for Public Works,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
J. S. WEBB,
Secretary.

Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

To the Hon. James Macandrew, Minister for Public Works.

THE undersigned members of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce desire respectfully to bring under the notice of the Government the necessity which now exists for the removal of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island to this place.

Your memorialists would respectfully represent :—

1. That, however desirable it may have been, before the completion of the main trunk railway, that the Commissioner should be located in Christchurch, the necessity for such an arrangement is now entirely done away with.

2. That Dunedin is now as nearly as possible the geographical centre of the railway system of this island, and that all that portion of the line the traffic on which requires the most vigilant supervision, on account of the sharp curves and heavy gradients, lies in the vicinity of Dunedin.

3. That the creation of proper station accommodation at Dunedin and Port Chalmers is one of the most important of the works at present requiring the attention of the Commissioner, and is one which is of vital moment both to the business community of this provincial district and to the success of the railways themselves.

4. That the lines now open for traffic in the Provincial District of Otago exceed 422 miles in length, whilst there are only 318 miles within the Provincial District of Canterbury; and it is therefore not proper that the head-quarters of administration should be so far removed from this district.

5. That the public feeling here in the matter is very strong, and has been intensified by the recent removal of the local paymasters, a step which seems to indicate a determination to centre all the management permanently in Christchurch.

1—E. 1.

Your memorialists confidently claim from the Government a fair and impartial consideration of the whole matter, with a view to satisfying the just requirements of the public of Otago.

E. B. Cargill.	R. Glendining.	P. Hayman and Co.
Geo. Turnbull.	John Davie.	B. Strachan.
Walter Guthrie.	Alex. C. Begg.	R. A. Law.
G. C. Matheson.	Wm. Thomson.	Chas. Neill.
R. Wilson.	Charles Moore.	Robert G. Murray.
Jas. T. Mackerras.	Robert McKenzie.	Montagu Pym.
James A. Walcott.	G. Lewis.	Max Mendershausen.
John Roberts.	A. Lee Smith.	John Sheen.
Jas. Marshall.	L. O. Beal.	Hugh Kirkpatrick.
Banks, Symond, and Co.	Wm. C. Roberts.	Robert Saunders.
George Joachim.	Robert Stout.	Ralph Ewing.
John O. Eva.	A. Bathgate.	Thos. Brown.
W. G. Neill.	John Hislop.	Hugh McNeill.
Sargood, Sons, and Ewen.	T. G. Young.	Keith Ramsay.
Horace Bastings.	John Mitchell.	William Scoular.
George Fenwick.	Allan Holmes.	J. B. Mudie.
G. G. Russell.	W. M. Hodgkins.	Geo. L. Sise.
A. S. Paterson.	M. W. Hawkins.	Edwin J. Spence.
J. Rattray.	James Wilkie.	Robert Gillies.
Wm. Parker Street.	J. R. Strang.	J. T. Ritchie.
James Mills.	A. H. Ross.	John H. Morrison.
Andrew Maxwell.	Grant P. Farquhar.	H. J. MacLean.
George Blyth.	J. G. Fraser.	Jas. Macassey.
W. Stavely.	Robert Paterson.	R. H. Leary.
H. Walden.	Wm. Gregg.	J. Hyde Harris.
M. Santhorp Nab.	Mills Brothers.	F. L. Clarke.
J. Cargill.	B. Hallenstein.	W. Irvine.
F. P. Kenyon.	Jas. Whitelaw.	Thos. M. Wilkinson.
D. M. Glendining.	A. McFarlane.	Edwd. Day.
John Edmond.	North and Scoular.	J. S. Webb.

No. 2.

The PRESIDENT, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.
(Telegram.) Christchurch, 28th July, 1879.

IN reference to the memorial of Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, suggesting the removal of the present Commissioner of Railways from Christchurch to Dunedin, the Committee of the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce respectfully submit that experience has fully justified the wisdom of the settlement of the Commissioner's Office at Christchurch. They feel sure you will give full consideration to the matter, and decide what is best for the interests of the community and the convenience of the Railways Department generally.

C. W. TURNER,

President, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

No. 3.

The SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.
SIR,— Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, 8th August, 1879.

I have now the honor, by direction of the Committee, to transmit a further copy of the petition of members of this Chamber, asking the Government to establish at Dunedin the head-quarters of the Commissioner of Railways for this Island.

The signatures to this copy are those of members who were unable to append them to the former copy before it was sent forward.

The Committee are sensible that at the present moment this matter cannot receive attention at your hands. They earnestly request, however, that you will, during the approaching recess, give consideration to the request embodied in the memorial, and especially to the great necessity that exists for the personal superintendence by the Commissioner of the urgently-needed enlargement and improvement of station accommodation at Dunedin and Port Chalmers. This adds a pressing immediate necessity to the arguments which have been already laid before you in favour of the desired change.

The Committee will be glad, in the event of your being in Dunedin at an early date, if you will give an audience to a deputation from the Chamber on the subject.

I have, &c.,

J. S. WEBB,

Secretary.

The Hon. J. Macandrew, Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

To the Hon. James Macandrew, Minister for Public Works.

THE undersigned members of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce desire respectfully to bring under

the notice of the Government the necessity which now exists for the removal of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island to this place.

Your memorialists would respectfully represent:—

1. That, however desirable it may have been, before the completion of the main trunk railway, that the Commissioner should be located in Christchurch, the necessity for such an arrangement is now entirely done away with.

2. That Dunedin is now as nearly as possible the geographical centre of the railway system of this Island, and that all that portion of the line the traffic on which requires the most vigilant supervision, on account of sharp curves and heavy gradients, lies in the vicinity of Dunedin.

3. That the creation of proper station accommodation at Dunedin and Port Chalmers is one of the most important of the works at present requiring the attention of the Commissioner, and is one which is of vital moment both to the business community of this provincial district and to the success of the railways themselves.

4. That the lines now open for traffic in the Provincial District of Otago exceed 422 miles in length, whilst there are only 318 miles within the Provincial District of Canterbury; and it is therefore not proper that the head-quarters of administration should be so far removed from this district.

5. That the public feeling here in the matter is very strong, and has been intensified by the recent removal of the local paymasters, a step which seemed to indicate a determination to centre all the management permanently in Christchurch.

Your memorialists confidently claim from the Government a fair and impartial consideration of the whole matter, with a view to satisfying the just requirements of the public of Otago.

Geo. Bell.
James Walls.
H. S. Fish, jun.
Henry Ewing.
Thomas Austin.
J. W. Brindley.
John T. Wright.
George W. Elliott.
Allan McLeod.

Jno. Wells.
J. Robin.
Daniel Haynes.
S. Kohn.
B. C. Haggitt.
Royse, Stead, and Co.
Albert Burt.
Jas. Scoular.
Fred. Maitland Jones.

Renshaw, Denniston, and Co.
E. Quick.
David Proudfoot.
John Findlay.
James Campbell.
P. C. Neill.
Alexander Thomson.
John McNall.
J. S. Webb.

No. 4.

The UNDER SECRETARY, Public Works, to the SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 15th August, 1879.

I am directed by the Hon. the Minister for Public Works to acknowledge the receipt of a memorial relative to the removal of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island from Christchurch to Dunedin, and to request that you will be good enough to inform the memorialists that the question has been submitted to the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island, with the view of obtaining his views on the subject prior to taking action thereon.

I have, &c.,

J. KNOWLES,

The Secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

Under Secretary, Public Works.

No. 5.

COMMISSIONER of RAILWAYS, Middle Island, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Office of the Commissioner of Railways (Middle Island).

Christchurch, 16th August, 1879.

Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister for Public Works re Location of Middle Island Commissioner's Office.

WITH reference to the annexed memorial from the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, advocating the location of the head-quarters of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island at Dunedin, instead of at Christchurch, I have the honor to submit the following statement of facts for your consideration. For the sake of convenience, I will deal *seriatim* with the five numbered paragraphs into which the Chamber divides the arguments it employs:—

The Chamber alleges, in paragraph 1, "That, however desirable it may have been, before the completion of the main trunk railway, that the Commissioner should be located in Christchurch, the necessity for such an arrangement is now entirely done away with." It cannot be denied that when I was removed from Dunedin to Christchurch the arrangement was avowedly a temporary one. At that time, when the Canterbury railways were divided by a wide gap from the Otago railways, the Canterbury railways, in point of mileage, traffic, and revenue, formed the most important section of the Middle Island railways. Whether that circumstance afforded sufficient ground for locating the head-quarters of the railway administration in Canterbury it is not perhaps worth while to inquire, that having apparently had no place in the considerations which led to my being sent here. The duty assigned to me was simply the reorganization of the business and arrangements of the Canterbury railways, and, that accomplished, it might be assumed that my special duty was at an end.

Paragraph 2.—"That Dunedin is now, as nearly as possible, the geographical centre of the railway system of this Island, and that all that portion of the line the traffic on which requires the most rigid supervision, on account of the sharp curves and heavy gradients, lies in the vicinity of Dunedin."

Christchurch is 34 miles from the northern terminus of the system (Amberley), and 455 miles from the southern terminus (Kingston), and cannot therefore be considered the centre of the system. Dunedin, on the other hand, is about 263 miles from Amberley in the north, and about 226 miles from Kingston in the south; and it is therefore indisputable that it is at present very centrally situated. A time may and probably will arrive when Christchurch will, by the extension of the railway system to the extreme north of the Island, assume a more central position in the system; but that is too remote a contingency to be a proper element in the consideration of the question at present. Taking the system as it exists, it is undeniable that Christchurch is at one extremity of the system. The other assertion made in this paragraph by the Chamber—namely, that the traffic on the Dunedin section, owing to the sharp curves and heavy gradients, requires vigilant supervision, does not admit of refutation; but it does not necessarily follow that this is a reason why the administration should be located in Dunedin.

Paragraph 3.—“That the creation of proper station accommodation at Dunedin and at Port Chalmers is one of the most important of the works at present requiring the attention of the Commissioner, and is one which is of vital moment both to the business community of this provincial district, and to the success of the railways themselves.” That increased and improved station accommodation is urgently wanted both in Dunedin and Port Chalmers, and that the question is of urgent importance to the business community of the Dunedin District, cannot be denied. It may also be admitted that the question has a more or less important bearing upon the working of the railways. But how far the presence of the Commissioner in Dunedin would tend to the promotion of those necessary works it is not for me to decide. When I first came to Canterbury, the Christchurch Station, in point of inconvenience of arrangement and scantiness of accommodation, was pretty much what Dunedin is now. In all these points Christchurch is at the present moment superior to anything of the kind in the colony, and equal, if not superior, to the best in the neighbouring colonies. The same thing may be said of Lyttelton in comparison with Port Chalmers.

Paragraph 4.—“That the lines now open for traffic in the Provincial District of Otago exceed 422 miles in length, whilst there are only 318 miles within the Provincial District of Canterbury; and it is therefore not proper that the head-quarters of administration should be so far removed from this district.” The statement that the mileage of the Southern Railways is in excess of the mileage of the northern system cannot be disputed, but I am not prepared to express an opinion upon the deduction which the Chamber of Commerce draws from this fact with reference to the location of the head-quarters of administration.

Paragraph 5.—“That the public feeling here in the matter is very strong, and has been intensified by the recent removal of the local paymasters, a step which seems to indicate a determination to centre all the management permanently in Christchurch.” It is no part of my duty to deal with the expression of “public opinion” in submitting to you my views upon a question of this nature. I would, however, state that the localization of the pay office in Christchurch was no part of a system of centralization. It had long been felt that the local paymasterships were unnecessary, and were simply a burden on the department, and advantage was taken of a favourable opportunity to abolish those appointments. The concentration of the pay business in Christchurch is the natural and inevitable outcome of existing circumstances, and it would have been effected long ago had I not felt a natural disinclination to take any step calculated to prejudice the interests of old servants of the department. As a fact, wherever the head-quarters of the administration are, there the Paymaster, the Accountant, and the Stores Manager, with their respective staffs, should be located; and any departure from this arrangement, as has been found in practice, is attended with grave inconvenience.

I have thus placed my views before you in reference to the allegations of the Chamber of Commerce in, I trust, an honest and impartial spirit, and it would not become me, I submit, in a question of this nature, to venture upon a recommendation; but I beg leave to assure you that, wherever the Government may be pleased to locate me, my best energies will be devoted to the business and interests of the department.

WM. CONYERS,
Commissioner of Railways, Middle Island.

No. 6.

The PRESIDENT, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,— Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, Christchurch, 8th September, 1879.

At the annual general meeting of the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce I was instructed to telegraph you as follows:—

“I have the honor to inform you that, at the annual general meeting of the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, I was instructed to telegraph you—‘That this Chamber views with the gravest concern the efforts now being made by a section of the Dunedin community to remove the Commissioner of Railways from Christchurch to Dunedin. They respectfully urge that the enormous and increasing traffic, together with the proper and efficient management of the Middle Island Railways, demand the head-quarters of the chief of the department be retained here, where the bulk of the traffic is centred. They are also of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to complete and render efficient the Addington workshops.’”

Since despatching the above message, you are reported in the telegraph columns of the *Press* newspaper to have stated, in answer to a deputation of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, that “The subject of the removal of the Commissioner of Railways should not be made an election cry.” With this view the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce thoroughly concur, and desire that the efficient working of the railway system of the Middle Island should be the first consideration, and that it should rest on its merits alone; at the same time, this Chamber is convinced that an unbiassed

inquiry into the working of these lines would point to Christchurch as the proper head-quarters for the Commissioner and his staff.

It may have been considered by a section of the Dunedin community that the presence of the Commissioner might be required temporarily in Dunedin to reorganize the lines centreing in that important city; but this Chamber is of opinion that this could be efficiently carried out by the Commissioner by an occasional visit to Dunedin, without the removal of his department from this city: as it is self-evident that a staff so thoroughly organized as that now under his control must contain several who, under Mr. Conyers's direction, are thoroughly competent to deal with and satisfy the requirements of Dunedin.

The removal of Mr. Conyers and his department would most seriously affect the working of the Canterbury Railways, and this Chamber is of opinion that this portion of the Middle Island Railways is, and will for many years remain, the most profitable and important portion of the New Zealand lines.

The following figures—which are a statement of the cash received on account of the Amberley, Bluff, and Kingston Line, for the twelve months ending 30th June, 1879—fully corroborate the opinion herein expressed:—

Period.	Division of Line.			Goods.			Passengers.			Total.		
1878.				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
July 1 to	District north of Waitaki	...	...	79,638	19	8	57,212	12	7	136,851	12	3
Dec. 28.	District south of Waitaki	...	...	53,237	19	8	50,935	16	7	104,173	16	3
				132,876	19	4	108,148	9	2	241,025	8	6
Dec. 28, to	District north of Waitaki	...	...	110,643	2	5	66,113	15	10	176,756	18	3
June 30, 1879.	District south of Waitaki	...	...	82,505	10	2	72,988	19	6	155,494	9	8
				193,148	12	7	139,102	15	4	332,251	7	11
	<i>Recapitulation.</i>											
July 1, 1878, to June 30, 1879.	District north of Waitaki	...	...	190,282	2	1	123,326	8	5	313,608	10	6
	District south of Waitaki	...	...	135,743	9	10	123,924	16	1	259,668	5	11
				326,025	11	11	247,251	4	6	573,276	16	5

I also give herewith returns, compiled from the Government *Gazette*, of the value of the foreign and intercolonial exports from the Port of Lyttelton and Port Chalmers for the twelve months ending 30th June, 1879; together with the aggregate tonnage and number of vessels (exclusive of those leaving in ballast) leaving the above ports for the same period:—

EXPORTS beyond New Zealand.

LYTTELTON.					DUNEDIN.				
Quarter Ending	N.Z. Produce, exclusive of Gold.	Other Colo- nies, British, and Foreign Manufactures.	Gold.	Total.	N.Z. Produce, exclusive of Gold.	Other Colo- nies, British, and Foreign Manufactures.	Gold.	Total.	
1878.	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	
Sept. 30 ...	219,170	15,160	...	234,330	126,905	1,475	130,504	258,884	
Dec. 31 ...	443,586	51,583	...	495,169	110,760	59,930	111,195	281,885	
1879.									
Mar. 31 ...	526,903	1,137	...	528,040	610,791	12,730	75,684	699,205	
June 30 ...	407,097	30,558	...	437,655	287,729	4,727	133,761	426,217	
	1,596,756	98,438	...	1,695,194	1,136,185	78,862	451,144	1,666,191	

SHIPPING beyond New Zealand.

				LYTTELTON.		DUNEDIN.	
				Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.
1878.							
September 30...	...	...	...	26	10,590	6	3,316
December 31...	...	...	...	16	8,908	7	4,433
1879.							
March 31 ...	...	...	...	13	12,146	16	11,977
June 30 ...	...	...	...	50	25,837	37	23,020
				105	57,481	66	42,746

These figures speak for themselves, more especially when it is remembered that the exports from Lyttelton are almost entirely borne there by the railways, and are mostly of such a bulky nature that during the pressure of the grain season the resources of the Railway Department are strained to the utmost to successfully cope with the heavy traffic thereby created. You are also no doubt aware that

a considerable portion of the exports from Port Chalmers are sea-borne coastwise, yielding little or no revenue to the railways; and, further, over 25 per cent. of the gross value of its exports is represented by gold, which affects the railway returns very slightly.

Relying on your zeal for the efficient and profitable working of the department under your immediate care,

I have, &c.,

GEO. G. STEAD,

President, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

No. 7.

The SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, 25th September, 1879.

Referring to mine of 8th August ultimo, to the memorial enclosed therein, and to the interview which you granted to the Committee of this Chamber when you were last in Dunedin, I am now instructed to ask you to favour the Chamber with an early reply to the memorial referred to, in which the Government are earnestly requested to remove to Dunedin the head-quarters of the management of railways in this Island.

The Committee do not think it proper to ask your attention to any controversial matter on a subject of this importance, because they feel that the decision you are asked to give will be founded upon the fullest official information, and arrived at in a judicial spirit. Otherwise, the Committee would be tempted to comment on a memorial recently forwarded to you by the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce. The figures in that document do not appear to the Committee to have any bearing on the subject. The traffic returns are for a period during the greater part of which the trunk lines in Otago were incomplete, and the comparison of tonnage exported at Lyttelton and Port Chalmers respectively is beside the mark altogether, the conveyance of merchandize between the capitals of the two provincial districts and their port towns being but one out of a large number of items that need the surveillance of the head of the department—one, moreover, which, with efficient appliances, must be about the least difficult to regulate of any.

The anxiety which exists here in the minds of the public generally, and especially of business men who use the railways, is the excuse the Committee direct me to proffer for addressing you again on the subject so soon.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. James Macandrew,

Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

J. S. WEBB,

Secretary.