

Am convinced that Parliament would not consent to pay a higher price even if I could recommend its being done, and if it did agree to pay a higher price I am sure it would not be in the interest of the ratepayers, as they would gain by waiting till power of compulsory purchase can be availed of.

EDWARD RICHARDSON.

29. Mr. CUTHBERT COWAN, M.H.R., to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 4th May, 1886.

Am extremely disappointed at your reply. Ratepayers' interest is not future, they want relief from £17,500 rates now or shortly due again. Wish you to consider question from view of value of line to Government. You forget the fact that Waimea is the line of greatest consideration to Government to possess of all the district lines, and it was on its back that the other lines were considered. As district is in earnest to effect change of ownership, will you accept pecuniary assistance from them to meet difference of price between Government and company; if so, say what part of it? Please submit this to Cabinet.

CUTHBERT COWAN.

30. The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to Mr. CUTHBERT COWAN, M.H.R.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 4th May, 1886.

WAIMEA Railway: The Cabinet fully realizes that ratepayers want present assistance. Had it not been so, the Government would not have authorized me to make any such offer as that already made. The matter has been considered by Cabinet on several occasions, and, in accordance with your request, again this afternoon. The value of the line to the Government has been fully explained by me and understood by it. I regret to say that the Cabinet feel compelled to decline any further concession. Sir Julius Vogel has handed me your telegram of to-day, and, as it is similar to those already dealt with, you will not expect further reply to it from me.

EDWARD RICHARDSON.

31. The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to T. FERGUS, Esq., M.H.R.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 6th May, 1886.

REPLYING to your telegram *re* Waimea Railway of 4th, I have only to state that the price offered by me on behalf of the Government is the utmost that the Government, after taking the various interests into consideration, can ask Parliament to give. The company has been informed to this effect.

EDWARD RICHARDSON.

32. DEPUTATION from the COMPANY to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

(Memorandum.)

Wellington, 24th May, 1886.

A DEPUTATION waited on the Hon. Mr. Richardson, at 9 a.m., on the subject of the price to be paid by the Government for the Waimea Plains Railway.

The company was represented by Mr. Wales and Mr. Leary, and the ratepayers by Mr. Cowan, M.H.R., and Mr. Valentine.

After a considerable amount of discussion, occupying about an hour and a half, during which it was elicited that the company demanded £4,000 more than the Government has offered, Mr. Wales definitely proposed, on behalf of the company, to split the difference, and accept £2,000 more than Government offer; he also stated that he had full power from the company to agree to a sale within certain limits.

Hon. Mr. Buckley was present during the latter portion of the discussion.

The proposal of the company now is that they will accept the offer contained in Hon. Mr. Richardson's letter of the 8th April last, as further explained by telegram of the 16th April, if the amount offered in said letter, namely, £33,000, be increased to £35,000.

Under this arrangement the company would be bound to give full effect to all existing agreements, as stipulated for in telegram of the 16th ultimo, before mentioned, but would not be bound to fence the railway throughout, or pay half cost of said fencing, that being a contingent liability which may accrue from time to time, but not a present existing liability.

C. Y. O'CONNOR.

P.S. As the negotiations for the purchase of this line seem likely now to come to a practical issue, it may be well to mention that this company has taken no steps as yet to supply the Government with the land plans and other records asked for in connection with all the district railways proposed to be purchased some eighteen months ago, and which were promptly supplied by all the other companies. There may, therefore, be even more delay in getting conveyance completed in this case than was the case with respect to the other companies. The reason given by the Waimea Plains Company for not supplying the data asked for was that there seemed no chance of their agreeing with the Government as to the price to be paid.—C. Y. O'C.