

I took note of the large extent to which hydraulic cranes are now used at goods dépôts and wharves. Up to the present the New Zealand Government has only essayed to introduce the system at Greymouth for coal-loading; but it appears suitable for some of the larger stations, such as Lyttelton, in connection with the wharves and with grain-storing, and at Christchurch and Dunedin, in connection with goods work; and the extent to which it should be adopted is a question which the officers of the department may with advantage consider and investigate.

The Locomotive Superintendent of the London and North-Western Railway (Mr. Webb) has kindly furnished me with particulars of his compound cylinder locomotive, of which he has a large number running. I have also been supplied by the consulting engineers with data respecting Wordsdell's compound engine, which is in use on the Great Eastern. It is claimed that some economy in fuel is obtained by their use. Both systems appear to be capable of adaptation to the 3ft. 6in. gauge, and the subject is one which should receive close attention and investigation before further locomotives are built for the New Zealand railways.

During my visit to various works I made note of such machinery as appeared suitable for the colonial shops, and I have requested the Agent-General to forward you the lists and estimates for procuring same.

I have received your instructions from the Agent-General to obtain information respecting railway matters from America, and I have accordingly arranged to leave England on the 17th by the s.s. "Gallia," of the Cunard Line, for New York; and I propose to leave San Francisco by the mail leaving there about the 2nd February, reaching the colony in March, unless it should appear desirable to remain longer in America for the purpose of getting information.

J. P. MAXWELL,

General Manager, New Zealand Railways.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,475 copies), £2 10s.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBUY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1888.