

No. 9.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 8th September, 1888.

I received on the 3rd instant your telegram inquiring whether there was any prospect yet of finding a man fit to be appointed Chief Railway Commissioner, but I had to reply, with regret, that I could not say the prospect was any better than before. The same conditions remain that existed when Sir E. Watkin, Mr. Findlay, and myself decided that we could not advise you to choose any of those who had applied up to that time; and, after varied inquiries, I am more than ever convinced that you cannot get the man you want at the salary offered. A man of that kind must combine a number of qualities which are rarely found in the same person anywhere, and such a man is so highly paid in this country that he would not be tempted for a moment by £2,500 a year. I may, with even more confidence than before, put the matter in this way: The colony cannot have the man it wants for less than £3,000, and it might be the best thing the colony ever did to give him £3,500; but to give £2,500 to any one who does not combine the qualifications absolutely necessary for success would be simply throwing money away. I should never forgive myself if I had induced you to do it.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 10.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 6th October, 1888.

I duly received your telegram of the 20th September, inquiring whether a suitable man for the office of Chief Railway Commissioner could be got if the salary were made £3,000 a year.

Out of all the men I have seen there has, up to this time, only been one whom I would for my own part, feel justified in advising you to appoint. I communicated with him at once, but I am sorry to say I have not been able to induce him to entertain the proposition of £3,000. As I have not, however, quite given up the hope that he may reconsider the matter, I wait to send any message till I receive a final answer from him.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 11.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 19th October, 1888.

I duly received your telegram of the 16th instant, reminding me that you were still waiting for a reply from me about the Railway Commissioner. You will have seen from my last letter (6th October, No. 1409) that I had not given up the hope of inducing the gentleman to whom I then referred to entertain a proposal for a salary of £3,000; but I now regret to say that he has finally decided to remain in this country. I am negotiating with another person, and hope to send you full particulars by next mail. Annexed are copies of your message and my reply.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 12.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

(Telegram.)

London, 29th October, 1888.

RAILWAYS.—No longer hope find man for £3,000 comes up my ideal. The question is whether Government content with really capable railway-manager. Watkin gone India, but Findlay decisively recommends appointment Francis Ree, second in command Liverpool District; stands next for high promotion North-Western; age, thirty-seven; practically governs traffic, exceeding two millions and a half tonnage annually, against keenest competing railways, canal-steamers, besides, perhaps, heaviest live-stock traffic in England; has two thousand men under immediate charge. The question is whether you will await information necessary to enable the Government to decide, or make appointment reliance upon Findlay's recommendation. I do not believe do better for £3,000.

F. D. BELL.

No. 13.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 29th October, 1888.

The telegram I have sent you to-day respecting the appointment of Chief Railway Commissioner has acquainted you that I have at last given up any hope of being able to find, for a salary of £3,000, any one coming up to my own ideal of what the Chief Commissioner should be; and that, to the best of my judgment, the question now before the Government simply is whether they will be content with a thoroughly capable man in the class of railway-managers.

The great powers conferred on the Chief Commissioner indicated very clearly the kind of man that was in the contemplation of Parliament in passing the Act of 1887. But it very early became