

dum from this office of the 6th May last, but, notwithstanding this, each of the memoranda received from the Commissioners since that date on the subject of the renewal boilers, has contained more or less reference to the matter of the additions to opened-lines vote. For the future I should be glad if the Commissioners would kindly arrange to keep the two matters entirely distinct and separate.

As regards your remarks on the matter of the renewal boilers, and more particularly your reference to a paragraph stated to have been published in the *New Zealand Herald*, of the 13th May last, purporting to report certain remarks of mine on the subject, I have to state that the Commissioners would have shown me greater courtesy had they first inquired as to the correctness or otherwise of the report in question. For the impression which that report has left on the minds of the Commissioners, I am of course not responsible, but as these impressions, whatever they were, were apparently formed on wrong premises, it is not necessary to pursue the matter further.

I note your explanation that the Commissioners' action in sending to England for the boilers referred to was due to there not being, in the opinion of the Commissioners, sufficient conveniences in the Government workshops for executing the work. In reference to this, I merely remark that some difference of opinion exists as to the sufficiency or otherwise of the appliances and conveniences at the Government workshops for the execution of the work in question. The Commissioners having made the statement, however, and the responsibility in the matter clearly resting with them, I do not desire to say anything more on that aspect of the question.

Your statement, that the sending of the order to England was due to the Commissioners having failed, "after repeated applications," to obtain from the Government sufficient funds to provide such extra accommodation at the workshops as was necessary in order to enable the work to be undertaken, I cannot, however, allow to pass unnoticed. The order for the boilers was, I understand, sent to England in July, 1890, and I can only find two memoranda from the Commissioners prior to that date in which the necessity of providing funds for increased shop-accommodation was urged upon the Government, and in one of these (memorandum of the 20th June, 1890) you admit that "funds for most of these works were provided by the Minister in last year's estimates," but that the money had been diverted to the alteration of the line at the Purakanui Cliffs. So that money for the purpose would seem to have been provided once, but improperly expended on some other undertaking. On the 1st November, 1890, you wrote to the late Government on the subject, and on the 17th February last you drew the attention of the present Government to the matter, but the order was in England before either of these memoranda was written, and, moreover, no opportunity has presented itself to obtain a vote of Parliament for the work since the dates of either of the memoranda referred to.

R. J. SEDDON,
Minister for Public Works.

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