

or the trams, which are far more convenient for local traffic, and would always be preferred by passengers. But in the case of holiday trips to the country, and of passengers travelling long distances, there would be a material saving to the people of trouble and expense if they could get into the train at Newtown, instead of taking omnibus or cabs to get to the station at Te Aro or Thorndon.

In a communication to the Minister for Public Works dated the 4th day of May, 1889, the Commissioners for Railways acknowledge that Newtown and districts beyond are likely to become populous, and will prove advantageous to connect by railway, but they do not favour taking the line through busy parts of the town, such as through the Basin Reserve. They recommend going by the Town Belt, through Constable Street and Newtown Park. This line would be over half a mile longer than the one by Kent Terrace, there would be 60 chains of tunnel, and, passing through very rough ground, it would be costly. Seeing how many populous towns have railways and steam-trams in the streets, I do not think there would be any inconvenience in taking the line up Kent Terrace, and a station at the Basin Reserve would still further accommodate the public, being just half-way between Newtown Station and the reclaimed land. The late Mr W N Blair also recommended the line up Kent Terrace, and along Adelaide Road. I do not recommend taking the line up Adelaide Road, as I consider the line I have described as preferable.

In regard to the station at Te Aro, I have examined the ground and taken note of the voluminous discussion that has passed on the subject. I found it also necessary to consult the plans for harbour extension adopted by the Harbour Board in 1884, which might be affected by the proposed railway-stations. I find that the ground at present reclaimed is only enough for a roomy and commodious passenger-station, and I should not advise anything of the nature of a makeshift being built with the idea of saving the space existing at present. If the station is necessary it should be provided with every facility for doing the large passenger traffic which is expected to arise in the future. It follows that to accommodate a goods-station also more land must be reclaimed, and I have shown how a goods-station may be placed, requiring 14,900 square yards of additional space, which will take about 80,000 cubic yards of filling. The breastwork of timber must also be re-erected, or else the new slopes must be pitched with rock. I should think this work would take considerably over a year to complete, as there are now more difficulties in the way of getting material to fill up new reclamations than formerly.

To satisfy myself as to the best use that could be made of the existing space at the reclaimed land, I have drawn on the plan a passenger-station, which is somewhat similar to the stations at Hobart and Launceston, with double platform and road access on both sides. The goods-station on the opposite side of the station-yard would face the wide road to be laid out along the dock and tidal basin, thus preserving the features of the design adopted by the Harbour Board in 1884. It was proposed by Mr Blow, in a communication dated the 21st May, 1886, to place the passenger-station for Te Aro between Cambridge and Kent Terraces, and to have the goods-station only on the reclaimed land. I have made a plan showing how this may be done (see Fig. 2) and also showing the goods-station only at the reclaimed land (see Fig. 3). The passenger-station at Kent Terrace is a good and sufficient one, and quite as convenient for access to the public as that on the reclaimed land. The objections to it are that it entirely takes up the Avenue and right-of-way between the terraces. Kent Terrace will be made narrower at the station-building, and communication will be cut off across the terraces between Pirie and Vivian Streets. I might be allowed to suggest that the Mayor and City Council should be consulted before deciding, as this is a subject that calls for full discussion by persons intimate with the requirements of the travelling public of the Te Aro end of the town. The advantages of placing the passenger-station in Kent Terrace appear to be that the reclaimed land now existing would in that case be amply sufficient for a commodious goods-station, and new reclamation would not be required at present, as it will be if both goods and passengers are placed on the reclaimed land. Also, the reclaimed land would be reserved for warehouses and business premises round about the dock and tidal basin, and the goods-station would have all its accommodation of space devoted to the merchandise traffic of the wharves and dock, which will be much required in the future when the shipping and coastal trade is largely increased.

It is to be observed that during a heavy north-west wind the spray flies over the reclaimed land in clouds, and a passenger-station must be protected by a close fence 12ft. or more high, which would be an unsightly obstruction to the view of the harbour. Of course, when the dock and its enclosing roads are formed this annoyance will be abated, but it may be many years before these are carried out.

On the plan herewith the two proposed sites for passenger-station are clearly shown, as well as the line which would extend to Newtown and on a separate map of the town the line to Newtown and the site for its station is indicated in a red line.

I am inclined to recommend the site at Kent Terrace for passenger-station, provided the Mayor and City Council see no objection to it, as I believe the sites on the reclaimed land would be more advantageously reserved for business traffic at the water-frontage, and passenger traffic would be in the way of the business accommodation required in the future.

There is, of course, the extra expense to be considered of dividing the stations—the goods at the reclaimed land, and the passenger at Kent Terrace—this and the convenience or otherwise for existing circumstances of the arrangement are questions which the Commissioners for Railways are best able to judge of, and should be considered together with the suitability of the position for the convenience of the travelling public.

I have, &c.,

C. NAPIER BELL, M.Inst.C.E.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

P.S.—I have not made out an estimate of works shown on plans herewith, as your Engineer would be more familiar with the cost of such work in Wellington than I am.