

and Australia : and a high probability exists, that rich gold fields may be discovered on all parts of the river Buller, and its tributaries. The presence of a population approaching in numbers to that of the Otago gold fields if even it should not continue settled beyond a few years might of itself justify the proposed outlay.

A few months, or perhaps weeks, will decide whether this is or is not to be the position of the Province, and I would respectfully suggest that His Excellency should be advised to suspend his judgment on the resolutions for a time. There are other reasons for such a course. The objections urged in the Provincial Council and out of doors are, doubts as to the quantity and quality of Crown Lands, to be rendered accessible and improved in value by such a work, and as to the cost of the work itself. Our present knowledge of the country is imperfect, and whether rich gold fields are found or not, we are certain to increase that knowledge very fast as the summer comes on by means of the tracks now in progress and the exhaustive prospecting which is going on. Nearly every new line that is cut through the Forest opens new indications of Mineral wealth, and the indications of a Coal field have appeared on the Upper Buller near the river Owen, one of its tributaries. Fresh approaches to the Main Valley are moreover being discovered from time to time. I think it quite possible that a very short period may place the question beyond reasonable doubt and satisfy all parties as to the propriety of the undertaking. If the gold fields prove extensively attractive it might be wise to proceed quickly with such a work and I should regret having caused by my hesitation any obstacle in the way of colonizing the interior of the Province. On the other hand I am not prepared with my present information to be a party to incurring a debt which would cripple the resources of the Province if its now unsettled districts should soon be cut off.

I have, &c.,

J. P. ROBINSON,  
Superintendent.

P.S.—I enclose copy of the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee of the Provincial Council.

J. P. R.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Auckland.

### Enclosure to No. 1.

COPIES OF FOUR RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ON JULY 31st, 1863.

"1. In the opinion of this Council it is the incumbent duty of the Government at once to take efficient means to open out the interior of the Province by a Road capable of affording at all times cheap communication with the Port, putting such an upset price upon all contiguous lands as would represent the great additional value thereby conferred on them."

"2. That a Railway would best fulfil these requirements."

"3. That a Railroad should be made with as little delay as possible to the Plain of the Four Rivers in the Central Buller."

"4. That the Superintendent be requested to apply to the Government of the Colony for permission to raise a Loan of £300,000 to defray the cost of constructing a Railway and other works essential to opening the Country ; and that as soon as conveniently may be after receiving an answer to this application, His Honor re-assemble this Council."

### No. 2

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, NELSON.

Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Auckland, 25th August, 1863.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, in which your Honor encloses a copy of Resolutions passed by the Provincial Council of Nelson in favor of the construction of a Railway into the interior of the Province, and the raising of a Loan of Three Hundred Thousand Pounds for the purpose.

Your Honor further suggests that His Excellency should be advised to suspend his judgment on the Resolutions for a time, as the lapse of a few months or even weeks will probably determine whether there are Gold-fields in the District to be opened by the Railway of sufficient extent and value to justify the proposed outlay, and will also place the public in possession of such an increase of knowledge as to the mineral capabilities of the District in other respects, and as to the quantity and quality of the lands to be made accessible, as may satisfy all parties of the propriety of the undertaking.

After a careful perusal of the Report of the Council and the evidence taken by the Select Committee of the Provincial Council, as well as of the debates in the Provincial Council, and the discussions on the subject at Public Meetings and in the public prints, I am compelled to conclude that the advisability of contracting so large a Loan for the Railway is at present, to say the least, very questionable.