

REPORT

OF

THE TELEGRAPHIC ENGINEER.

General Government Electric Telegraph Department,
Christchurch, Nov. 15, 1864.

SIR,—

I have the honor to furnish you with a report on the progress of the works entrusted to my care, and at the same time to offer certain suggestions which may guide the Government in arriving at any decisions that may be necessary to lay before the General Assembly at its approaching Session.

I have recently returned from a general inspection of the works now being prosecuted in the southern portion of the Middle Island, and I will first sketch out the actual state of these works, and offer any remarks that may present themselves to my mind in so doing.

Bluff and Invercargill Provincial Telegraph.—Commencing at the Bluff, it will be remembered that the Southland Provincial Government has already erected a single line of wire, which has now been in successful working for some months.

By a previous arrangement, I believe it was agreed that the General Government should be empowered to place two wires for its own purposes on the posts now standing and used by the Southland Government.

I think it will be seen that the working of two different departments, namely, General and Provincial Government, would not only necessitate useless expense, but cause mutual injury, by establishing and maintaining an unnecessary competition. I have therefore deemed it expedient to enter into an arrangement for the purchase of that necessary portion of the main trunk line from His Honor the Superintendent of Southland, and His Honor has kindly consented to transfer this portion of the line to your Government, at its original cost of material and erection.

The total cost of this nineteen miles of line will be Eight hundred and twelve pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence, being at the rate of Forty-two pounds fifteen shillings and six pence nearly per mile—a very reasonable cost. Attached are the various items of the work. (Appendix A.)

£812 15s. 6d.

£42 15s. 6d.

Should this line be taken over, I shall use the wire now erected, and simply have to make the addition of a second wire, necessary for carrying out the uniformity of the remaining portion of the trunk line.

Invercargill and Mataura.—Proceeding to Invercargill, the point where our own works actually commence, I am happy to report that the whole of the posts are erected between that town and the Mataura River.

This portion of the work, I may add, is very creditably and satisfactorily performed, and I have therefore passed the work in due course, and furnished the Contractor, Mr. James McKenzie, of Dunedin, with his certificates for the usual payments amounting to eight hundred and ninety-nine pounds five shillings; a balance being retained till completion of contract, amounting to two hundred and ninety-nine pounds fifteen shillings.

£899 5s.

£299 15s.

Mataura and Molyneux.—Between the Rivers Mataura and Molyneux, the Contractor is busily engaged erecting the posts, and is working from both these Rivers towards a centre.

As far as I could judge from the portion of work already done, that work is advancing very satisfactorily, and may be expected to be completed about the beginning of December ensuing.

The Contracts are let for delivering the wire, insulators and arms, along this portion of the line; and I see no reason why that section of the line should not be completed by the end of December, if the works be steadily prosecuted in due course.

We now come to that section of the work lying between the Molyneux River and the City of Dunedin. The posts on this portion of the line are all erected under a contract entered into with Mr. James McKenzie, by the Otago Provincial Government, prior to the resolution of the General Government to take the work into its own hands. I regret to say that a few of these posts will have to be removed to more convenient positions, and that a few extra posts will have to be erected, owing to irregularities in the roads.

In this, however, no blame can be attached to the Contractor, as he has set up the posts at points marked out by the Assistant Surveyors, and the whole question may be reduced to one of misunderstanding of instructions, or error of judgment in carrying out the same. Under any circumstances the error is certainly excusable.