

Enclosure in No. 2.

MEMORANDUM for the Honorable THE MINISTER OF COLONIAL DEFENCE.

There are two trunk lines of road which, in the opinion of the Provincial Government of Wellington, it would be very desirable both for the interests of the North Island generally and of the Province of Wellington in particular to have opened up immediately.

The one extends from the point of termination of the existing North Western Trunk line, North of Wanganui, up to the northern boundary of the Waitotara block; and would pass through the Kai Iwi and Waitotara Blocks—the former of which there is every reason to believe, will be presently acquired with the concurrence of the Natives, and the latter has already been acquired though not yet laid out for settlement.

The length of this line would be about 25 miles, and having recently examined it I can state that it presents no engineering difficulties. It is not proposed to continue this line at present to the Patea River, the Northern boundary of the Province and distant from the Waitotara about 24 miles, as the country between is occupied almost exclusively by rebel natives.

The overland communication with Wellington would then be completed along the West Coast, from the Northern boundary of the Waitotara block to the Port of Wellington, in the following manner, viz.—by an inland road about 55 miles in length from Waitotara to Rangitikei, by a sandy beach from Rangitikei to Wainui, and thence by an inland road to Wellington.

The other line may be designated the North Eastern trunk line and may be described as leading from the Township of Masterton in the Wairarapa to the boundary line of the Province of Wellington, situated in the Forty Mile Bush opposite the Manawatu gorge; and would be continuous with a main line of road to be taken through the Napier portion of the same bush on to the Ruataniwha Plains. Were this line of road from the Wairarapa to the Ruataniwha Plains opened up a distance of about 50 miles through the bush (which is nearly equally divided between the Provinces of Wellington and Hawkes Bay) the entire inland communication would then be established between the towns of Wellington and Napier—a distance of nearly 200 miles, the roads being already open for traffic from Wellington to Masterton, a distance of about 64 miles, and from Napier to Ruataniwha respectively.

In other words the formation of about 50 miles of road would enable the Colony to avail itself of an internal communication nearly 200 miles in length; the detached ends of which are at present only serviceable in a Provincial sense.

A third trunk line would commence at a point on the Rangitikei River, indicated on the accompanying map, at which the present North Western Trunk line diverges towards the Coast.

From this point the line should be carried to that part of the Tararua Range where it thins out and affords an easy passage to the Forty Mile Bush, where it would intersect the Wellington-Napier trunk line. The length of this line would be about 40 miles.

Although this line may be regarded of great importance as a connecting inland route between the West and East Coasts yet its formation would obviously be subsequent in point of time, although not inferior, perhaps, in ultimate importance to that of the North and South lines which it would connect.

In reference to these proposed trunk lines it is submitted,

1. That when the general purport and direction of the lines, as indicated, should have received the approval of the General Government, the Superintendent should be immediately empowered to have the requisite preliminary Engineering surveys undertaken and that the necessary expenditure thus incurred should be afterwards re-imbursed out of the proceeds of that portion of the Three Million Loan allocated to the Province of Wellington.

2. That on the completion of such preliminary surveys a report on the several proposed lines with the estimated cost of each, should be submitted by the Superintendent for the final sanction of the General Government.

It would of course be inopportune to proffer any statement in anticipation of such reports, further than to remark, that the instructions of the Provincial Government to their Engineer would be to lay off all trunk lines with the view to the formation of Railroads.

3. That when the final sanction of the General Government should have been granted, the Superintendent should be entrusted with the entire future management of the proposed works, and be provided from time to time with the necessary funds for carrying them on, out of the special proceeds of the Loan above referred to.

In support of the above proposals it is urged that the 5th section of the Loan Appropriation Act, which imposes the ultimate liquidation of the debts incurred in the execution of any permanent undertakings on each particular Province, thereby fairly entitles any Provincial Government to ask for and obtain the management of such undertakings, subject before commencement to the special sanction of the Colonial Government, and renders it unnecessary to advert to the incidental advantages of having a staff of officers acquainted with the control of such works.

But if this concession with respect to the formation of certain trunk lines be deemed a reasonable and economical arrangement; the management of immigration and the location of settlers may be regarded as more peculiarly belonging to the functions of the Provincial Government. Nor does it indeed appear feasible that those functions could be conducted harmoniously and successfully within the limits of a Province except through such agency.

The Provincial Government proposes that these trunk lines should be constructed by the immigrants, under the same system as was successfully adopted in the Wairarapa. Ample reserves divided into sections of a reasonable size would be made in each district through which a road was being made. On each section a labourer would be located with the option of purchasing it at the upset price either at any time during the progress of the road or when it was completed. The immigrants would be permitted to work as many days as they thought fit on their allotments and would be encouraged to take small contracts. The advantages of such a plan are sufficiently obvious. By having Government employment given to them almost at their very doors the immigrants gain by a few days' work in each week on