

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF

New Zealand Telegraph Office,
Wellington, 3rd July, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit for your information the following Report on the progress and condition of the Telegraph Department under my supervision during the financial year ending 30th June, 1868.

EXTENSION OF LINES.

DURING the past financial year the contracts for the extension of the Electric Telegraph in hand at the close of the year 1866–67 have been completed.

WELLINGTON TO CASTLE POINT.

These contracts comprise the portions of the line between the City of Wellington and Masterton, in the Wairarapa Valley, and between Masterton and Castle Point.

Considerable trouble and delay has been experienced in carrying out these works, owing to the fact of the line not having been regularly surveyed in the first instance. The omission of this important feature in the construction of a new line has added much to the cost of this section, which should have been the cheapest line yet constructed, owing to its proximity to timber suitable for poles.

Some difficulty was found in making a good line between the City of Wellington and the Hutt, owing to a very great number of sharp turns in the road, but by the occasional use of large poles and long spans, these difficulties have been overcome.

The poles between Wellington and Castle Point, are either heart of matai or heart of totara, and the line consists of a double wire throughout. Offices have already been opened at Featherston and Greytown, the cost of maintenance being defrayed by the Provincial Government. It is in contemplation to open an office at Masterton. A temporary office has also been opened at Castle Point.

The length of the line between the City of Wellington and Masterton is $59\frac{3}{4}$ miles, and between Masterton and Castle Point $35\frac{3}{4}$ miles; making a total length of $95\frac{1}{2}$ miles between the City of Wellington and Castle Point.

CASTLE POINT TO NAPIER.

Tenders were called for in May, 1867, for the supply and delivery of telegraph poles between Castle Point and Napier, in two sections, viz., between Castle Point and Porongahau, and between Porongahau and Napier. Tenders for both sections were accepted at the same time. The contractor for the first-mentioned section, however, failed to proceed with the work, and forfeited his deposit money. Under these circumstances, and for the purpose of avoiding the serious loss of time which would have been involved in calling for fresh tenders, arrangements for the completion of the work were made with the contractors for the Porongahau and Napier section. Had the original contractor carried out his contract, Wellington would for some time past have been in telegraphic communication with Napier. Every effort is being used to hasten the completion of this portion of the line, viz., between Castle Point and Porongahau; and I have no doubt that it will be accomplished within a few days.

The contractors for the supply and delivery of the poles between Napier and Porongahau, completed their contract in the early part of February last. While this delivery was in progress tenders were called for the erection of the line, and were accepted in the early part of January. The contractor, Mr. E. O'Malley, used great exertions to complete his contract within the time specified, and was most successful in doing so. The Inspector has borne frequent testimony to the workmanlike and efficient manner in which the contractor has performed his work; a circumstance which it will be well to bear in mind in any future works.

The poles used between Tenui and Napier are all heart of totara, and although the country in which they are erected is in many places very broken and unfavourable for a telegraph, yet owing to the great care that has been taken in the selection of the timber, and in supervising their erection, the poles will without doubt stand good for ten or fifteen years, if not longer. Stations have been opened at Waipukurau, and a temporary one while the new office is being built at Napier. It is in contemplation to open one at Waipawa, should the inhabitants of that rising township agree to guarantee the Department against loss in its maintenance.

The length of line between Tenui and Porongahau is 53 miles, and between Porongahau and Napier 68 miles; making a total length of 121 miles between the town of Napier and the junction with the Castle Point line at Tenui.

NAPIER TO WAIROA.

This portion of the trunk line of telegraph between Napier and Auckland has been very carefully surveyed by Mr. Edward H. Bold, who, after a complete examination of the country, has recommended that the line should follow, generally, the bridle track between Napier and Wairoa. The survey was completed at the beginning of May, and tenders have been invited for the supply and delivery of the poles.