

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OBSERVATORY.

No. 1.

The Rev. Mr. Stock to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

MY DEAR MR. HALL,—

Government Buildings, 19th October, 1868.

I have, as you perhaps know, charge of the Wellington Time Ball. As the meridian post is hidden by the Telegraph Office, I cannot now give chronometer time. I have asked the Provincial Council to grant me a sum for erecting an Observatory; the sum required would be not more than £250 at the very outside. On my own responsibility I venture to ask if you could manage to procure for me the necessary funds. The Provincial Council have no funds at their disposal to carry out their grant. The place I have chosen is the best in Wellington, near the jail, for quiet security of never having the meridian posts hidden.

If this were done, time-balls could drop from ours at each port. The ball gear is not expensive. I need hardly say that Wellington, being the centre of the telegraph system, is the best place for the Observatory, which would have to use the telegraph wires. I enclose a sketch and plan of the Observatory I should like to see erected. It is a grief to me to have the splendid instruments in my charge rendered almost useless, and quite useless for the original intention.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. J. Hall, Postmaster-General.

A. Stock.

No. 2.

The Rev. Mr. Stock to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

MY DEAR MR. HALL,—

Time Ball Observatory, 19th October, 1868.

I omitted in my hurried note this morning to state as an additional reason for my request that I have for a long while given time to the telegraph stations of the General Government, and twice, at the request of the Surveyor, true time to the West Coast Survey. I can get at this by observing a North and South star, when both stars are visible. I was thinking of work which might be done, not of what has been done.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. John Hall, Postmaster-General.

A. Stock.

No. 3.

Dr. HECTOR to Mr. GISBORNE.

Geological Survey Office,

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GISBORNE,—

Wellington, 18th November, 1868.

I think that the General Government should take over the transit instruments and other apparatus from the Provincial Government, and establish an Observatory permanently, for the purpose of giving time by telegraph throughout the Colony. The site proposed by Mr. Stock is too remote from the other public offices, and I would recommend, as the most eligible site, a knoll on the ridge behind the Cemetery, opposite to Bolton Street. This site is within the reserve for the Church of England Cemetery, but not within that portion already consecrated and used as a burial-place, so that I do not anticipate that there would be any difficulty in getting immediate possession of the site, and it might hereafter be permanently secured by being included in the Schedule of the Public Domains Act.

I have consulted with Mr. Stock, and he has expressed his willingness to continue to superintend the Observatory when removed to the site I propose, if he can have assistance from my department in performing the periodical mechanical duties. Mr. Stock is also willing to superintend the removal and readjustment of the instruments, which is a work requiring great skill and practical familiarity with their use.

I have also arranged with Mr. Stock as to the best plan for the new Observatory, in which I wish also to establish the meteorological instruments; and if erected according to the plan we have agreed on, the total expense will not exceed £200, and may perhaps be kept within £150. The Postmaster-General has undertaken to provide part of the funds, and also to make the necessary telegraphic connections, in consideration of the Telegraphic Department being regularly provided with the correct time every week-day, for transmission to the various stations throughout the Colony.

The Provincial Secretary informs me that, if applied to, the Provincial Government will be glad to make over the instruments to the General Government at once, at the same time naming a reasonable portion of the original cost as their present value, which it is to be understood will be repaid to the Province, if a vote can be obtained from the Assembly for that purpose.

If the above proposition meets with the approval of Mr. Stafford and Mr. Hall, it will be necessary—

1st. To communicate with the Cemetery Trustees or the Archdeacon, as to obtaining immediate use of the site, and right of access to it, with the material for the construction of the Observatory.