

PAPERS RELATING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS.

I.—BY SIR CHARLES FOX AND SONS, MR. BROGDEN, M.P., AND MR. BRUNLEES,
LONDON.

No. 1.

The Hons. F. D. BELL and I. E. FEATHERSTON to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

London, 16th September, 1870.

We have the honor to enclose copy of a letter from Sir Charles Fox and Sons relative to narrow-gauge railways. As we require the enclosures to that letter for the present, and duplicates cannot be obtained in time for this mail, and perhaps may not be procurable at all, we reserve for another day our own observations on the subject, on which occasion we shall also write to you respecting the Festiniog line.

We may briefly, in the meanwhile, say this, that although of course our own views on such a subject lack the authority which attaches to the opinion of persons skilled in engineering, we may venture to express the confident assurance that the system of narrow gauge is most eminently suited to the circumstances and conditions of a country like New Zealand. And further, that in view of the large expenditure which the New Zealand Government will now have to undertake in public works and railways, it is of the greatest importance that the Government should obtain the services of some engineer of high standing in England for the purpose of drawing up such a general report on the narrow-gauge system as may convey that kind of precise and detailed information, and that scientific comparison of the merits of the various experiments in cheap railway works now being carried on in several countries, which can alone be put in a thoroughly intelligible form for the guidance and decision of your Government.

To do this would not merely require a cursory examination of documents and suggestions, but a careful professional inspection of what has actually been done in England, in Norway, in Russia, in Germany, and in Canada. We have not felt ourselves warranted in incurring without instructions an expense so considerable as this proposal would involve; but we are certain that in the long run it would be the most economical thing to do; and if the Government should decide upon doing it, we need hardly say that there would be no difficulty in their obtaining the highest professional skill for the purpose.

We have, &c.,

F. D. BELL,
I. E. FEATHERSTON } Commissioners.
(by F. D. Bell), }

The Hon. W. Gisborne.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Sir CHARLES FOX and SONS to the Hon. F. D. BELL and Hon. I. E. FEATHERSTON.

GENTLEMEN,—

Spring Gardens, S.W., 12th September, 1870.

Referring to our interview with Dr. Featherston on Saturday last, we have now the pleasure to hand you the following documents relating to the subject of railways:—

1. *Carnatic Railway of India*.—(1.) Contract with Indian Government. (2.) Prospectus.
- (3.) Consulting Engineer's report. (4.) Report of Sir C. Fox on gauge.

This railway is a light railway of 5 feet 6 inches gauge.

The Government guarantee 5 per cent. on the capital under conditions which are considered satisfactory to investors, and also give the Government full control. This form of contract is one of the best ever devised.

2. *Cape Railway Company*.—(1.) Contract with the Colonial Government. (2.) Prospectus.
- (3.) Report of first General Meeting.

These papers are sent as affording an example of an unsatisfactory guarantee. The contract does not give the Government sufficient control, nor does the guarantee extend to the total expenditure on the railway.

3. *Canadian Railways*.—(1.) Prospectus of Toronto, Grey, and Bruce Railway Company.
- (2.) Prospectus of Toronto and Nipissing Railway Company. (3.) Pamphlet on same subject.
- (4.) Resolution of Directors.

The railways are 3 feet 6 inches gauge, thoroughly well constructed under our supervision, by capital raised entirely in Canada: one-third by bonus or free gift from municipalities; one-third by shares; and one-third by debentures. The total cost will not exceed £3,000 per mile, including everything. The passenger carriages on this line are 8 feet 6 inches wide.

4. *Report on Norwegian Railways*.

5. *Memorandum and Drawings* showing details of four light railways.

6. *A Sample Joint of Permanent Way* (forwarded to care of Mr. Morrison).*

7. *Regulation of Railways Act*, containing light-railway clauses for the United Kingdom, inserted chiefly through the exertions of our senior partner.

* This can be seen at the Colonial Museum.