

The Kaipara Railway, with the extension already proposed, and steam services on the Kaipara waters, which, in common with other local steam services, the Executive recognize as coming properly within the sphere, and in all probability within the means of the Provincial Government, will, it is believed, go far towards providing means of access to the settlements and lands immediately abutting upon the Kaipara harbour and its tributary rivers, but it would appear requisite for the profitable settlement of the country that a good road should be opened from the settlement of Port Albert to Mahurangi, another across the country from Paparoa to Wangarei, and a third following the coast line, and connecting Mahurangi with the Nova Scotian settlement at Waipu, and both with the Wangarei district. From the fork of the Wairoa, the natural terminus of the steam services on the Wairoa River, a main line of road should be opened, passing through the rich country above referred to as existing in the northern district, communicating at the same time with the Bay of Islands and Hokianga districts and harbours.

In addition to these proposals for the purchase of Native lands and opening up communication with the north, the Executive propose that the Immigration Loan should be taken advantage of for the purpose of procuring and settling on the lands and in the districts thus acquired and opened up, an agricultural population suitable to the wants of the Province. It is considered that this could be done without difficulty, by offering, to suitable classes in the mother country, the inducements of cheap passages for themselves and families, and free grants of small holdings on conditions of settlement and improvement. The experience of the Government immigration promoted some years ago to the district on this side the Waikato River is considered by the Executive as affording sufficient proof of the extreme feasibility of the scheme, and indicating the difficulties to be met with in carrying it out.

By a judicious use of the road works to be carried out in their neighbourhood, and a careful reservation of lands adjacent to the various settlements, to be sold to these settlers when they shall be in a position to purchase them, there can be little doubt that a very large and most valuable population could be settled in the northern districts without difficulty, and with the happiest results, both to the immediate neighbourhood settled and to the country at large.

The cost of introducing immigrants is not very easily calculated; but if it is supposed that persons of a suitable kind could be obtained by an expenditure of £7 10s. each person, in addition to their own contributions, it would be possible to introduce 3,000 families, averaging four adult members, at a cost to the Province of less than £100,000.

8. The proposed expenditure on account of the north, if we suppose three-fourths of the immigration proposed to belong to those districts, would thus be—for land purchase, £75,000; for roads, £75,000; for railway extension, £60,000; and for immigration, £75,000; making in all a sum of £285,000; but little more than the probable cost of the construction of the extended railroad line from Mercer to the Waikato frontier. This division of expenditure does not appear to the Government to be wholly equitable towards the north, but it is proposed as a measure of justice, which may, upon its proving a success, be supplemented by further expenditure in the directions already indicated.

9. In addition to the proposals already made, the Executive would urge the desirability of such a modification being made in the Public Works Acts of the Assembly, as would admit of an advance being made out of the Loan in aid of improvements for the Harbour of Auckland, to the extent of say £75,000; and a sum of from £60,000 to £80,000 for a water supply to the city and suburbs of Auckland. It is scarcely necessary to urge the great desirability of these works, as the importance of the improvement of the harbour of Auckland, not only to the Province but to the Colony at large, can hardly fail to be apparent to all, while there can be little or no doubt that the supply of water to the city at such a cost would prove not only a useful but a highly reproductive work.

10. The Executive, in making these proposals, do not lose sight of the great advantage to be derived from the construction of a line of cheap railroad connecting the Thames Gold Fields with the valley of the Waikato, near the frontier settlements. The valley of the Thames would, it is believed, afford exceptionally great advantages for the construction of such a line; and in view of the benefit to be derived from thus connecting the agricultural country with a market, the Executive would not hesitate to advise the immediate undertaking of the work, did such a course appear to be feasible. At present this is not the case; but, as it is impossible to say how long the obstacles to opening the Upper Thames may continue, the Executive would recommend the reservation of a sum of at least £200,000, with the view of providing the means for undertaking this work as soon as circumstances render it feasible.

11. A recapitulation of the above proposals will show the following results:—The Executive would recommend the construction of the railway to Mercer, if possible upon guarantee. They also recommend the immediate prosecution of the work of its extension to the delta of the Waikato, at a cost probably not exceeding £250,000. They would urge the desirability of connecting the Provincial railroad from Kaipara to Riverhead with the City of Auckland by a line of railway about eighteen miles long, probably costing about £60,000. They would advocate every exertion being made to induce the Colonial Government to authorize an expenditure of £75,000 for roads, and of £75,000 for land purchase in the north of the Province; and they would most strongly recommend that provision should be made for the immediate introduction of the water supply to the Thames Gold Fields, even should it appear that the cost of the work would be likely to exceed the £50,000 asked for by the Provincial Council; and that a sum of £200,000 should be reserved for the construction of the Thames Valley line of railroad so soon as the attitude of the Natives renders such a work possible. To these proposals the Executive would add the gradual introduction, at a cost not exceeding £100,000, of a suitable class of immigrants into the Province, in accordance with the scheme already prepared and submitted for your Honor's approval.

Finally, the Executive would strongly urge the importance of such a modification being introduced into the Immigration and Public Works Act of the Assembly as would enable the Colonial Government to sanction an expenditure out of the loan of £75,000 for harbour works, and about £75,000 for a supply of pure water to the city of Auckland.

The proposals thus made will involve, if carried out, an expenditure of about £960,000, a sum which, large as it may appear, is not greater than may be fairly claimed by the Province as its legitimate