

It is proposed to metal the road from Masterton to the Gorge (sixty miles), which has been formed and bridged by the General Government out of the vote of £400,000 for roads in the North Island.

As I understand there will be no further sums available for the metalling of this road, and as it is of great importance, being the line proposed for future railway extension, the Provincial Government is willing to have it metalled if the funds can be provided; and also to complete the line of road from Alfredton, intersecting this line from east to west. The cost of the first work is estimated at £15,000, of the second at £10,000.

In addition to these works there are others which the Provincial Government desire to press on this year, mostly having for their object the facilitating the settlement on land by immigrants.

Altogether, the Provincial Government desire to undertake, this year, by means outside the ordinary and territorial revenue, new works to the extent of £66,000, inclusive of the £25,000 already more particularly referred to.

After the interview to-day, I am encouraged to ask the General Government if it will be prepared to sanction my opening negotiations with any Bankers, Loan Companies, or capitalists, who may be disposed to advance the above-named sum, for a period not exceeding five years, on the security of the before described blocks, and, if so, whether the Government will either themselves introduce, or promise to support if I introduce, a Bill into the Assembly authorizing such security to be given for any such loan.

As the Provincial Council meets on the 30th instant, I beg to be favoured with your decision as early as practicable.

I have, &c.,

W. FITZHERBERT,

Superintendent.

The Hon. J. Vogel, Minister for Immigration.

No. 56.

The Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Wellington.

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 29th April, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th April, on the subject of setting apart land for settlement, and referring to our previous interview on the subject.

2. Your Honor is aware, from what passed at the interview between us, how very much importance the Government attach to land being made available for settlement. Whatever may be said in favour of special settlements with land sold under conditions of cultivation, a preliminary want requires to be satisfied—that of enabling persons who have accumulated savings, or who are earning money from which they can put by savings, to obtain small farms to settle upon where circumstances permit them to do so. If an immigrant applied to me to know where, without competition, he could select and secure 200 or 300 acres of land in the Colony, I should find it difficult to tell him he could exercise any large range of selection except in the Province of Canterbury. It is true that, without conditions of settlement, such purchases might remain unimproved; but even so, the purchaser is attached to the Colony, and looks forward to using his land, and the more he pays for it the more anxious he is likely to be to turn it to good account.

3. Therefore, I am very pleased to find your Honor ready to supply in this Province the means by which any one wanting land in small quantities may readily obtain it. I am glad you consent to dispensing with resort to auction between rival applicants. I would even suggest a step further, viz.: That when of two applicants for the same piece of land, one has already secured, by other selections, 500 acres, the preference should be given to the other applicant without drawing by lot. I presume, by your Honor's reference in your letter to the draft regulations which you submitted, that though you do not mention it in the epitome of the plan contained in your letter, you still adhere to the feature of selling by selection only alternate sections, the sections not selected to be reserved from sale for at least two years.

The plan then would in effect enable any one to go into the Land Office and come out at once a landowner, a point to which I attach much importance; and by selling only alternate sections, and by charging a fair but sufficient price, another important point will be gained in discouraging the application of one or two persons for the whole of the land.

4. You will gather from what I have said, that the Government cordially approve of the proposed setting apart of land and the mode of sale. I now come to the conditions upon which your Honor is willing to make the reservation. I explained to you that the Government had not funds enough left, out of the vote for North Island roads, to complete the road between Masterton and the Manawatu Gorge, and that it was computed about £15,000 was required to complete it. Your Honor expressed yourself willing to move the Provincial Council to vote the expenditure, if you could be assured of the means to meet it out of advances to be recouped by the sale of land, which the completion of the road would make saleable. You also stated that there were other roads and some bridges which you considered essential to promoting settlement, and to construct which you require an anticipation of revenue. I explained to your Honor, without committing myself to any precise declaration of policy, that I was of opinion the expenditure of the Colonial Government upon the railways (which were being constructed much quicker than was originally intended) was such that I did not think Parliament would be inclined to sanction either the raising or expenditure of much other borrowed money for a year or two, until the Colonial works were more nearly completed. At the second interview, your Honor, having taken into consideration what I had said, proposed to reduce to about one-third, the amount which you had contemplated asking authority to borrow, and inquired whether the Government would support a measure for raising the amount on the security of, and in anticipation of the proceeds of, the blocks of land proposed to be set apart.