

1876.

NEW ZEALAND.

RAILWAY BETWEEN THAMES AND WAIKATO,

(PETITION RESPECTING).

Presented to the House of Representatives, 12th July, 1876, and ordered to be printed.

To the Honorable the Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

THE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED REPRESENTATIVES OF A PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT THE THAMES
ON THE 21ST DAY OF JUNE, 1876,

HUMBLY SHOWETH,—

THAT since the Report of the late Daniel Simpson, Esquire, upon a flying survey of a proposed railway between Thames, Ohinemuri, and the Waikato, made by order of the Government in June, 1873, no steps appear to have been taken to carry out the proposals and recommendations contained in that report. Since the date thereof, a considerable additional population has been settled at Ohinemuri, Puriri, Hikutaia, Katikati, and Piako. While increased necessity thus exists for intercourse between the various points of production and consumption in connection with the prospected line, the difficulties to such intercourse remain; that these difficulties will be felt more and more every day, and industries—such as mining, and the trade in timber, gum, agricultural and dairy produce, articles some of which are urgently needed in the Waikato and at the Thames—must remain to a great degree undeveloped while no means exist of carrying them to market. The produce of the Waikato consumed at the Thames can now only be sent by way of Auckland, thereby entailing 150 miles of carriage, while the distance by the natural route, the Thames Valley, from Hamilton or Cambridge to Thames, is 64 miles from the former and 57 from the latter township; and, as a further proof of the loss which both districts sustain by reason of the want of direct communication between them, it may be here stated that, as practically cattle cannot be driven from the Waikato to Thames, the latter place is thus compelled to depend for its supply of butchers' meat upon the cargoes of live stock brought by coasting steamers and other vessels from the East Coast. The construction of this line of railway would greatly facilitate the settlement of the great area of fertile land lying between the River Thames and the Waikato (shown in the sketch plan on margin), while, under the sanction of your honorable House, no difficulty could occur in the acquisition of the land necessary to carrying out the scheme, which would be hailed by the Natives generally as a great boon. The country over which the proposed line of railway would pass is almost level, and no engineering difficulties whatever exist. For the last eight or nine years the necessity for communication between the Thames and the Waikato has been apparent, the reason for such being no less political and strategical than commercial and social. In view of the great and obvious advantage to result to the whole of this district and to the Waikato by the construction of a railway between Thames and Waikato, and of the certainty of a great and increasing traffic on the line, connecting, as it would, the whole of this Peninsula with the Waikato and Tauranga Districts, your Petitioners would humbly beg that your honorable House would either authorize the construction of the proposed line of railway, or give such a guarantee as might lead to its construction by private enterprise, or grant such other relief as may to your honorable House appear fitting.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

J. E. MACDONALD,
(and 10 others).

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