

MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to JOHN KNOWLES.

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 3rd December, 1878.

THAMES County Council had better be informed that they will be replied to on my reaching Wellington, where I hope to arrive early next week.

J. MACANDREW.

J. KNOWLES to J. KILGOUR, Mayor, and OTHERS.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 9th December, 1878.

I AM directed to inform you that the Hon. Mr. Macandrew leaves for the North this afternoon, and that you can therefore see him in reference to your telegrams *re* Grahamstown end of railway.

J. KNOWLES.

(Telegram.)

W. A. MURRAY, Esq., M.H.R.

10th December, 1878.

Re your letter of 26th November, relative to commencement of Thames and Waikato line at Te Aroha. Minister and Mr. Blackett left yesterday for Auckland. Will you please see them thereon?

J. KNOWLES.

Mr. W. A. MURRAY, M.H.R., to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Piako, 16th December, 1878.

I wrote to you on the 26th ultimo, but Mr. Knowles telegraphs that you and Mr. Blackett had left just before my letter reached Wellington, and suggesting that I should see you. I advised that, as I would be leaving for Otago soon, I should be glad to know when, in accordance with your wish, I could see and make certain recommendations to the Engineer. I shall be glad to see Mr. Blackett, but think that it would be undesirable that the gentleman who is blamed for many costly errors on the Auckland railway line should also be intrusted (if at all) with laying out the Thames line. I also advise that the line should be begun at Te Aroha, on Thames, for these reasons: The railway required nothing but to lay down the sleepers and ballast, and some ditching, and, in a few places, some earth-work and fascines where at present a little soft; that the unrivalled water carriage from Auckland to Te Aroha would supply material cheaper than you could even by rail and cartage by way of Hamilton till that bridge (which, had the main line been laid out right, would have been unnecessary) is made; and that is the only work of any consequence to prevent the line being made in six months, and will cost as much as the whole line between Te Aroha and Hamilton, excluding sleepers and rails. Beginning at Te Aroha would give employment to Thames unemployed, be a compromise, and please the Thames people; would render available for railway use the best kauri, rata, and puriri in the colony. It would also help to sell the Government land, whereas at Hamilton the land is nearly all in the great land company's hands. I would suggest that, in surveying the Te Aroha town, the town lots should not exceed one rood, and that suburban lots of from one to five acres be laid off on deferred payments; rural lots not to exceed 320 acres, and half at least on deferred payments, with settlement conditions. There should, I think, be no delay in offering part of these lands for sale; and with a considerable addition thus to the settlers, and the railway available for the five hundred Thames Volunteers, we should be under no further fear of Native troubles.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Auckland.

W. A. MURRAY.

Mr. J. BLACKETT to Mr. J. STEWART.

Memorandum for Mr. Stewart.

Auckland, Public Works Office, 19th December, 1878.

Re Waikato-Thames Railway.—Hon. Minister for Public Works directs that the works for the above be commenced at Grahamstown as soon as the necessary surveys can be made, for which please make very early arrangements.

I expect plans to be sent from the Thames, which will enable me, on their arrival, to give detailed instructions. In general terms, the intention is to get ready a few small contracts, say, one for station reclamation on the foreshore, beginning at Kauaeranga Wharf; one from same point upwards, say to right-angle bend of new County Road; and one from that point upwards, say three, four, or five miles, as most convenient: these being got ready so as to give almost immediate employment. The survey of the remainder of the line could be proceeded with, and other contracts for a few miles got ready from time to time. These first contracts will be formation only.

The Minister is in correspondence with the Hon. the Native Minister as to securing the lands necessary for the line, and you will be duly informed when the arrangements are complete; but before this is the case the work, excepting the foreshore reclamation, must not be begun. It will be found that the course of the railway line must necessarily follow that of the County Road, or very nearly so, say on the river side of it. The road is one chain wide, and the same width alongside of the road will probably be enough for the railway, cutting off any unnecessary curves, and avoiding, if possible, any Maori cultivations, in crossing which opposition might be met with.

The Minister directs that every effort be made to carry out this work energetically and expeditiously, so that real progress may be made to a large extent during this year.

JOHN BLACKETT.

MR. BEERE,—

19th December, 1878.

You will please prepare to proceed to this work with all energy, and at the earliest possible moment after receipt of plans. I will go with you.

JOHN SHEEHAN.