

1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

RETURN SHOWING THE COST OF SLEEPERS SENT FROM
WELLINGTON TO THE WAITARA.

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Macandrew, with the leave of the House.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Public Works Office, Wellington, 5th August, 1879.

THE cost of the sleepers delivered into trucks at Waitara is from 4s. 8d. to 4s. 10d. each. They are of Tasmanian hardwood (Eucalypti), and are procured from Tasmania.

It is not right, however, to state this without saying what the circumstances were which obliged the Government to purchase these sleepers. The contractors for supplying rimu sleepers at Waitara had broken down. In Foxton district the contractor (Lash) for 30,000 sleepers had failed to deliver, and has since broken down. Other contractors (Richter, Nannestead, and Co.) were much behind time. In Auckland the contractor for 25,000 (Maclellan) quite failed to fulfil his contract. Tenders for 100,000 sleepers had just been called in the colony without a single response. The prosecution of the railway from Waitara towards Stratford depended on obtaining sleepers promptly. The only sleepers available were about 1,000 from Auckland, which were delivered at Waitara at a cost of 4s. 2d. each. While, therefore, the Government called local tenders immediately for supply, it was not thought prudent, in the face of so many failures, to rely wholly on local supplies. An offer was just to hand to supply Tasmanian sleepers of a superior class, and, to preclude any risk of stoppage of work, the Engineer recommended obtaining a certain number, which has been done.

JOHN BLACKETT.

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Price 3d.]

