

the notice of the Government the necessity which now exists for the removal of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island to this place.

Your memorialists would respectfully represent:—

1. That, however desirable it may have been, before the completion of the main trunk railway, that the Commissioner should be located in Christchurch, the necessity for such an arrangement is now entirely done away with.

2. That Dunedin is now as nearly as possible the geographical centre of the railway system of this Island, and that all that portion of the line the traffic on which requires the most vigilant supervision, on account of sharp curves and heavy gradients, lies in the vicinity of Dunedin.

3. That the creation of proper station accommodation at Dunedin and Port Chalmers is one of the most important of the works at present requiring the attention of the Commissioner, and is one which is of vital moment both to the business community of this provincial district and to the success of the railways themselves.

4. That the lines now open for traffic in the Provincial District of Otago exceed 422 miles in length, whilst there are only 318 miles within the Provincial District of Canterbury; and it is therefore not proper that the head-quarters of administration should be so far removed from this district.

5. That the public feeling here in the matter is very strong, and has been intensified by the recent removal of the local paymasters, a step which seemed to indicate a determination to centre all the management permanently in Christchurch.

Your memorialists confidently claim from the Government a fair and impartial consideration of the whole matter, with a view to satisfying the just requirements of the public of Otago.

Geo. Bell.
James Walls.
H. S. Fish, jun.
Henry Ewing.
Thomas Austin.
J. W. Brindley.
John T. Wright.
George W. Elliott.
Allan McLeod.

Jno. Wells.
J. Robin.
Daniel Haynes.
S. Kohn.
B. C. Haggitt.
Royse, Stead, and Co.
Albert Burt.
Jas. Scoular.
Fred. Maitland Jones.

Renshaw, Denniston, and Co.
E. Quick.
David Proudfoot.
John Findlay.
James Campbell.
P. C. Neill.
Alexander Thomson.
John McNall.
J. S. Webb.

No. 4.

The UNDER SECRETARY, Public Works, to the SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 15th August, 1879.

I am directed by the Hon. the Minister for Public Works to acknowledge the receipt of a memorial relative to the removal of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island from Christchurch to Dunedin, and to request that you will be good enough to inform the memorialists that the question has been submitted to the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island, with the view of obtaining his views on the subject prior to taking action thereon.

I have, &c.,

J. KNOWLES,

The Secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin.

Under Secretary, Public Works.

No. 5.

COMMISSIONER of RAILWAYS, Middle Island, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Office of the Commissioner of Railways (Middle Island).

Christchurch, 16th August, 1879.

Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister for Public Works re Location of Middle Island Commissioner's Office.

WITH reference to the annexed memorial from the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, advocating the location of the head-quarters of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island at Dunedin, instead of at Christchurch, I have the honor to submit the following statement of facts for your consideration. For the sake of convenience, I will deal *seriatim* with the five numbered paragraphs into which the Chamber divides the arguments it employs:—

The Chamber alleges, in paragraph 1, "That, however desirable it may have been, before the completion of the main trunk railway, that the Commissioner should be located in Christchurch, the necessity for such an arrangement is now entirely done away with." It cannot be denied that when I was removed from Dunedin to Christchurch the arrangement was avowedly a temporary one. At that time, when the Canterbury railways were divided by a wide gap from the Otago railways, the Canterbury railways, in point of mileage, traffic, and revenue, formed the most important section of the Middle Island railways. Whether that circumstance afforded sufficient ground for locating the head-quarters of the railway administration in Canterbury it is not perhaps worth while to inquire, that having apparently had no place in the considerations which led to my being sent here. The duty assigned to me was simply the reorganization of the business and arrangements of the Canterbury railways, and, that accomplished, it might be assumed that my special duty was at an end.

Paragraph 2.—"That Dunedin is now, as nearly as possible, the geographical centre of the railway system of this Island, and that all that portion of the line the traffic on which requires the most rigid supervision, on account of the sharp curves and heavy gradients, lies in the vicinity of Dunedin."