

a considerable portion of the exports from Port Chalmers are sea-borne coastwise, yielding little or no revenue to the railways; and, further, over 25 per cent. of the gross value of its exports is represented by gold, which affects the railway returns very slightly.

Relying on your zeal for the efficient and profitable working of the department under your immediate care,

I have, &c.,

GEO. G. STEAD,

President, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

### No. 7.

The SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, 25th September, 1879.

Referring to mine of 8th August ultimo, to the memorial enclosed therein, and to the interview which you granted to the Committee of this Chamber when you were last in Dunedin, I am now instructed to ask you to favour the Chamber with an early reply to the memorial referred to, in which the Government are earnestly requested to remove to Dunedin the head-quarters of the management of railways in this Island.

The Committee do not think it proper to ask your attention to any controversial matter on a subject of this importance, because they feel that the decision you are asked to give will be founded upon the fullest official information, and arrived at in a judicial spirit. Otherwise, the Committee would be tempted to comment on a memorial recently forwarded to you by the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce. The figures in that document do not appear to the Committee to have any bearing on the subject. The traffic returns are for a period during the greater part of which the trunk lines in Otago were incomplete, and the comparison of tonnage exported at Lyttelton and Port Chalmers respectively is beside the mark altogether, the conveyance of merchandize between the capitals of the two provincial districts and their port towns being but one out of a large number of items that need the surveillance of the head of the department—one, moreover, which, with efficient appliances, must be about the least difficult to regulate of any.

The anxiety which exists here in the minds of the public generally, and especially of business men who use the railways, is the excuse the Committee direct me to proffer for addressing you again on the subject so soon.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. James Macandrew,

Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

J. S. WEBB,

Secretary.