

The line is a continuation of the Government line from Wairio to the Nightcaps, a distance of from two to three miles.

This railway was built on exactly the same lines as the Government railways, layed with 40lb. steel rails, securely fenced with barbed wire, and with ample station-yard at the Nightcaps terminus, where coal and public sidings, small goods-shed, platform, weighbridge, &c., were erected, capable of coping with the greatly-increased traffic in the future. The whole was constructed under the supervision and direction of Mr. Dartnall, the then District Engineer, and the line differs in no way from other Government lines, except that it was paid for by this company instead of by the Government. (See District Engineer's report of the 17th April, 1884.)

The line has now been open and worked daily for more than three years, and we beg to refer you to your own reports on working railways to prove, if need be, that it has been worked without a hitch, and at a low cost for maintenance during that time.

On the 3rd March, 1882, after spending close upon £20,000 on land, colliery, railway-plant, &c. (including £7,224 on railway, see report), the Otautau-Nightcaps line was opened to the public for goods and passenger-traffic, under "The Public Works Act, 1882," one train up and down daily, as at present; the Government working our portion of it from Wairio to the terminus at Nightcaps, and *vice versa*, as if it was their own line—namely, by charging the ordinary rates on all goods (coal included) and passengers running over it, and retaining all receipts, in return maintaining the line for the company, which arrangement has been carried out to this day.

Since the opening, some 35,000 tons of coal, a large quantity of wool, grain, timber, building and fencing material, live stock, stores, &c., also passengers, have been carried over the line at a profit to the Government, and the public look upon the line as part and parcel of the Government railway.

As evidence that it is largely used for traffic other than coal, we would point out that some time ago your Government saw fit to appoint a caretaker at Nightcaps (at a salary of 10s. per week) on the urgent representation of the settlers in the township and district, who are also desirous of more shed-accommodation, which we cannot comply with, as the outlay would benefit the Railway Department only.

This line has been of immense advantage to the district, having resulted in the sale of the Government lands at high prices, and the settlement on same by an industrious and hard-working population; and if purchased by the Government would undoubtedly be a good and sound investment at the price mentioned in Mr. Dartnall's telegram: the company being further willing to include in sale a free title to any further land that may be required at the Nightcaps terminus for railway-purposes.

The line is an extension of the Government system, to where it was originally intended to take it, namely, the Nightcaps Coalfield, which is the natural terminus and outlet for the entire district; besides which it acts as an important feeder to the main line.

Trusting that this application *re* the purchase of our line will meet the favourable consideration of your Government, and eventually result in our request being granted,

We have, &c.,

NIGHTCAPS COAL COMPANY,  
Per J. R.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

## No. 2.

THE WHANGAREI COAL-MINING COMPANY to the Hon. the PREMIER.

*Re Whauwhau Branch Railway-line.*

SIR,—

Auckland, 21st June, 1886.

We are advised by the deputation of Auckland members who waited on you relative to the taking over of this line by the Government that, if a definite offer were made to the Government by us, the matter should be referred to the Public Accounts Committee. We hasten to act on their suggestion.

*Formal Offer.*—The company ask the Government to refund the actual cost of railway, viz.:—

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Land and compensation (approximate) ... .. | £1,000 |
| Paid Government for formation ... ..       | 4,040  |
| Paid for sleepers and cartage ... ..       | 327    |
|  | <hr/>  |
|  | £5,367 |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Cancellation of debt owing by us to Government for rails supplied for railway ... .. | £1,177 |
|  | <hr/>  |

That is to say, we will take £5,367, and the forgiveness of debt, £1,177. We would point out that this line was built by Government with their materials and under their supervision, so that the Government know that these figures are actual cost. The line is in perfect order at present.

We would bring under your notice a few reasons which we think should influence the Government in taking over this line.

Firstly. During the days of Provincialism Mr. Ormiston, then member for Mangapai, got a grant of £2,000 passed in the Provincial Council for the purpose of making a tramway-line from the Whauwhau Mine. It was recognized and put aside by the Government for that purpose. In the meantime Mr. Ormiston died, and the provincial system was abolished, and Sir Robert Douglas was returned as member for the County of Marsden. The Kamo Coal Mine was discovered, and Morrin and party bought the mine. By this time Sir George Grey was Premier, and was prevailed on by the Kamo people to use the £2,000 that was put aside for the Whauwhau line to paying