

I have not been able to trace the rumour to any definite source, much less to discover there is any ground for the report, but as the rumour is in circulation I would ask you to request the Railway Commissioners to place you in the position of being able to deny it.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
W. B. PERCEVAL.

### No. 2.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

The Railway Commissioners.

21st April, 1891.

RE renewal boilers ordered from England: The contents of your memorandum of the 13th instant, on the above-mentioned subject, have been duly noted, and an interim reply sent to Mr. Perceval, M.H.R., on the subject. Before Mr. Perceval's letter can be replied to fully, however, it is necessary that the Government should be in possession of some further information in reference to the matter, and I should therefore be much obliged if you would be so good as to furnish me with replies to the following queries at your early convenience accordingly: (1.) Could not the boilers in question have been made in the colony, and was any colonial engineering firm asked for a quotation for them? (2.) Was the order that was sent to England for the boilers directed to be intrusted to any particular firm for execution, or were tenders directed to be invited for the work? (3.) How many renewal boilers were under construction in the Addington and Hillside workshops respectively at the time that the order for the four boilers referred to was sent to England? (4.) How many boiler-makers have been discharged from the two workshops mentioned during the last twelve months, and have all those retained worked full time during the same period?

R. J. SEDDON, Minister for Public Works.

### No. 3.

The RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

28th April, 1891.

IN reply to your letter of the 21st instant the Railway Commissioners beg to draw your attention to the absence of any reference by you to the very pressing question raised by them—viz., as to the intentions of the Government as regards providing funds for additions to opened lines to meet the exigencies of the traffic maintenance.

It is now more than two months since the Commissioners first addressed you, drawing attention to the previous correspondence on this subject.

As regards the minor points of your letter: Although the Commissioners obtain from colonial contractors such work as it is found suitable to get, as, for instance, girder-work, they do not think it advisable to get locomotive-boiler work done by tender in the colony.

In the absence of any intimation from the Government of its intention to provide the funds required, prudence demands that the Commissioners should, from time to time, order further proportions of work from England, as certain duties with regard to the safety of the railways and the convenience of the public are imposed on the Commissioners by the Government Railways Act which they must not neglect.

As regards the practice in the Government offices in London in obtaining supplies, except in the case of special brands of goods which may be manufactured only by one firm, it is usual to invite tenders. The Agent-General would invite tenders for all such work as boilers, locomotives, rails, &c.

The Commissioners do not think it necessary to reply to the third and fourth questions.

JAMES MCKERROW, Chief Commissioner of Railways.

### No. 4.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

The Railway Commissioners.

6th May, 1891.

RE renewal boilers ordered from England: I am directed by the Minister for Public Works to acknowledge the receipt of the Chief Commissioner's memorandum of the 28th ultimo on the above-mentioned subject, and to reply thereto as follows:—

1. The reason why no mention was made in the Minister's memorandum of the 21st ultimo to the matter of providing further funds for works on opened lines was that it seemed inadvisable to merge the question then immediately at issue—viz., the reasons that induced the Commissioners to send to England for renewal boilers, that it appeared to the Minister might have been made in the colony, in the larger question of the improvement of the opened lines generally.

As, however, the Commissioners apparently desired an answer to their inquiries as to what provision would be made for works on opened lines during the current financial year, before carrying the correspondence on the minor matter of the renewal boilers any further, the Minister at once directed me to inform you that provision would be made in the Public Works Estimates for 1891–92 for works on opened lines to the extent of £20,000, and I had the honour to inform you to that effect accordingly by memorandum No. 88/1191, of the 29th ultimo.

2. This larger matter having now been disposed of, the Minister directs me to again address you on the minor matter of the renewal boilers. The particular point on which the Hon. Mr. Seddon would be glad to be furnished with additional information in reference to this matter is as to the