

No. 3.

MEMORANDUM for ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

Public Works Department, Engineer-in-Chief's Office,
7th February, 1893.

MR. ARTHUR BELL having informed me that he was again asking, on his now-proposed retransfer to this department, to receive the rank and salary that he contended for on a former occasion, I beg leave to protest most decidedly on my own behalf against anything being done that should place him in a higher rank or award him higher remuneration for work to be done in this department than my own, leaving for the others affected, perhaps more than myself, to take action in their own interests if they think fit.

As you are aware, Mr Bell is junior by many years to many officers of this department, myself included, my seniority being about five years, and up to the date of his being attached to the Defence Department he occupied a junior position to myself, as some time previous to my transfer to Wellington I was altogether employed in the Head Office, Middle Island, in designing special works and not only so, but in one case I had to take up and do work in the strengthening of the Waimakiriri Gorge Bridge, which he had given him but could not at that time do, except by inapplicable and inaccurate methods. Mr O'Connor, who afterwards gave me the work to do and designs to prepare, never attempted it himself, and he and Mr Blair accepted my results, and carried out the requisite works in accordance therewith.

Since I came to the Head Office in May, 1884, my work, as the office records will show, has all been Head Office work, and shortly after my arrival I was verbally instructed by Mr Blackett to supervise all work done, and see that it was structurally correct, Mr Wrigg, late Chief Draftsman, being present when these instructions were given. Altogether, up to 1888, the special works alone for which I was in all cases very largely responsible, amounted to over £200,000. (See my memorandum of 20th July, 1888, and Messrs. Blackett and Blair's remarks thereon.)

In 1890 I had to repair the Rakaia Gorge Bridge, Mr. Bell, as the office records will show, was equally involved in this with Mr O'Connor, to whom the matter was referred by Mr Blair, and his connection with this failure, about which I do not wish to make any strong remarks, is not such as entitles him to rank and precedence in this department over an officer who has succeeded so far in doing a large amount of similar work—the most important class of work dealt with by the department—without unfavourable verdicts at the hands of nature.

If Mr Bell now uses Mr Blair's minute "I concur" of 1st July, 1890, for the purpose of getting higher work and salary in this department than others of us, I can say, from my own knowledge of Mr Blair's opinions on the point, that he (Mr Blair) would never have consented to any such thing, he having assured me, in a long conversation we had a few days after the date of the above memorandum, that he would never think of placing Arthur Bell in a higher position than myself in the department, and I beg to submit that nothing has since transpired which would warrant a reversal of the above statement, and in the same conversation Mr Blair most emphatically stated that he knew, of his own knowledge, that outside influence had been used in Mr Bell's favour as a result of which, perhaps, he had been placed in the very favourable position, as regards salary which he now enjoys.

Shortly put, Mr Bell now practically asks to be made second in this department, irrespective of any hardship that such an act may inflict on others. And I beg respectfully to submit that the professional work yet done by Mr Bell gives him no claim to any such position, especially as he has had many years' less experience of the works usually done in the department than I have had myself, and, as I have shown above, he has not been exceptionally fortunate in his attempts to excel in the highest class of work which has to be done in it.

In writing this I wish it to be distinctly understood that I have no wish to injure Mr Bell's prospects in the public service in any way, his own action has forced me to do so in self-defence. All I ask for is even-handed treatment while I remain in the service, and to be at least equally rewarded if I can do work as well, without preferring any claim to excel, which I could do by sufficiently amplifying the details of the above-cited cases and others.

Hoping that you will kindly forward these remarks for consideration of the Hon. Minister for Public Works before this question comes up for final decision,

The Engineer-in-Chief.

I have, &c.,

P. S. HAY

No. 4.

The ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the Hon. MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Wellington, 24th February, 1893.

IN accordance with your instructions I have gone carefully into the matter relating to the claim of Mr A. W. D. Bell, as stated in his memorandum of 30th ultimo to the Under-Secretary for Defence, to the effect that if he is required to resume the position of an engineer in the Public Works Department in accordance with the terms of the letter from the Engineer-in-Chief dated the 11th July, 1885, in which Mr A. W. D. Bell, Assistant Engineer, is informed that "it is proposed to transfer him to the Defence Department as Resident Engineer at a salary of £400 per annum, and should the defence works cease at any time your position in the Public Works Department would not be prejudiced," the rank and position of District Engineer should be conferred upon him, as he contends that accepting the grade of Resident Engineer in the Public Works Department would lower his professional standing in the public estimation, and besides would be contrary to the spirit of an agreement made with him by the late Hon. Minister for Public Works and Defence at the time when he was instructed by memorandum from the late Hon. Minister for Public Works, dated the 21st July, 1890, that "The Hon. Minister for Defence being desirous that your whole attention should be devoted to the harbour defences of the colony during the next six months, I have to