

as the best site in New Zealand for the seat of the General Government'. If this was the strongest statement worthy of report the case must have been weak indeed; nevertheless there were visits to Blenheim and the formal hearing of the usual submissions.

The *Rangatira* brought the party round to Nelson on the 22nd³⁷ where Dr David Monro, a prominent Nelson citizen, did his best, although a representative of Picton in the House of which he was Speaker. He missed a cruise round the bay on Saturday with the Superintendent, J.P. Robinson, and J.C. Richmond, briefly Provincial Secretary. The vessel went first to the Croisilles, before crossing over to Collingwood where she anchored for the night. Docker managed to take some photos when the party landed next morning, before a return to Nelson by Separation Point and Kaiteriteri.³⁸ In slight variation of its formulae the press noted that the subjects on which the commissioners laid most stress were the present harbourage and the possibility of extending it, the quantity of land still available for settlement '... the present area of the city... drainage, sewerage, the visitations of earthquake... and the general capabilities of the place, including the manufacture of bricks'.³⁹ The *Examiner*, to emphasise the town's relative stability, gave a most detailed history of Wellington's convulsions, which, if somewhat overplayed, were perhaps the most comprehensive summary so far printed.

On Monday it was the turn of the Chamber of Commerce and the customary hospitality. Monro had problems arranging a return dinner—'great difficulty in getting poultry and everything very awkward in consequence'.⁴⁰ The event preceding this occasion was an excursion towards the province's mineral hope by the Dun Mountain railway. At the lower levels Docker got some shots but at the saddle mist rolled out and the weather 'turned out badly'. Docker's disappointment was probably mitigated by the gift of views taken by a local photographer, for Monro noted on 1 October that 'Mr Docker has had all the photographs'.

Towards the end of the stay, J.C. Richmond and his wife Mary attended 'a grand dinner and evening party for the Commissioners'—one can almost feel Docker's groans. Mr Gunn, however, was 'a very pleasant intelligent man' whom Richmond, according to his wife, 'likes the best. He is a scientific man',⁴¹ an echo of Taylor's opinion in Wanganui, namely that 'Mr Gunn is a great botanist and a very intelligent man'.⁴² What, if anything, was said between Richmond and Gunn about William Colenso, the former's parliamentary colleague and bete-noir but at least a scientific colleague and correspondent of Gunn's, is not recorded.

The three men professed themselves 'delighted with the beauty and pleasantness of Nelson' but gave no clue as to their decision;