

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO COST OF CONVERTING SMOOTH-BORE INTO RIFLED GUNS.

No. 1.

Mr. J. MORRISON to the Hon. D. McLEAN.

Office of the New Zealand Government Agency,

3, Adelaide Place, King William Street, London, E.C., 29th June, 1871.

SIR,— Having been favoured by Major Palliser with copy of a letter addressed by him to the Agent-General for Victoria, respecting the conversion by his process of smooth-bore into rifled guns, I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the same, as it may prove of interest to the Government.

With reference to Major Palliser's remarks as to the probability of procuring guns, carriages, and platforms from the Imperial Government for the purpose of conversion, I beg to state that, having had an interview with the Controller of the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich on the subject, I am led to understand that the guns specially alluded to by Major Palliser, with their carriages and platforms, cannot be supplied by the Imperial Government.

The Hon. the Minister for Colonial Defence,
Wellington, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
JOHN MORRISON.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Major PALLISER to the Hon. G. VERDON, C.B.

SIR,— Army and Navy Club, 17th May, 1871.

With reference to your letter 4605-71, of the 8th instant, I have the honor to inform you that the cost of converting 68-pounder and 32-pounder cast-iron guns respectively into 7-inch and 6·3-inch (64-pounder) rifled guns, would be as follows, for fifty guns of each nature :—

Conversion of 68-pounder into 7-inch gun	...	...	£195
Conversion of 32-pounder into 6·3-inch gun	...	...	£130

To this must be added the costs of sights and sighting, £8 10s. each gun, and the cost of proof by Government, which I understand from Major Scratchley, R.E., is £8 9s. 6d. for the 7-inch, and £6 11s. 7d. for the 6·3-inch gun.*

I have been informed at the War Office, that in the event of the Government of Victoria making application for the purchase of cast-iron guns for purposes of conversion, they would probably be supplied at £5 per ton. This price is just one-fourth of that which the Home Government originally paid for these guns. This very low price is caused by the fact of there being at present more cast-iron guns in store than are likely to be required for purposes of conversion by the Home Government. I also understand that there are excessive numbers of wooden carriages and platforms in store, and that these would probably be supplied to the Government at Victoria at half their cost price. The original cost of wooden garrison carriages, complete, with beds and elevating screws, is £47 18s. for 68-pounders of 95 cwt., and £43 15s. for 32-pounders of 56 cwt. The cost of the dwarf traversing platform for either nature of gun is £63 11s.

Thus the cost of a 7-inch rifled gun complete, with carriage and platform, delivered at Woolwich would be—

			£	s.	d.
Cast-iron casing, 95 cwt. at 5s. per cwt.	...	...	23	12	6
Conversion	...	...	195	0	0
Sights and sighting	...	...	8	10	0
Proof	...	...	8	9	6
Carriage by rail from Woolwich to Newcastle and back	...	...	24	0	0
Total cost of 7-inch gun of 5 tons weight			£259	12	0
Carriage (wood garrison), half-price	...	...	23	19	0
Dwarf traversing platform, half-price	...	...	31	15	6
Total cost of gun, carriage, and platform			£315	6	6

It is probable that an arrangement could be made for sending 68-pounders by sea from Woolwich to Newcastle and back, in which case the cost of transit would be reduced to £9, and consequently the

* Cost of conversion, inclusive of proof and sighting, 7-inch gun	...	...	£211	19	6
Cost of conversion, inclusive of proof and sighting, 6·3-inch gun	...	...	145	1	7