

PAPERS RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF TRAMWAYS ON THE WEST COAST OF THE PROVINCE OF WELLINGTON.

No. 1.

Mr. BLACKETT to the Hon. Mr. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Manawatu, 28th November, 1870.

I have the honor to report that during my recent trip to Tirohanga I carefully inspected the line of road from Foxton to Palmerston, along which it has been proposed to construct a tramroad. I have not seen any road which offers such facilities for trying the experiment, being almost perfectly level from end to end, and offering so few obstructions of any kind.

From Foxton to the Oroua Bridge, a distance of about fourteen miles, the road lies through a sandy country; and beyond the Oroua Bridge, a distance of about ten and a half miles, through a clay country, destitute of any material for metalling, except at the far end at Palmerston, or in the bed of the river, at a distance of one and a half to two miles off to one side. With Mr Stewart, the District Engineer, I have prepared an approximate estimate of the cost of making a wooden tramroad along the entire length, with the following results:—

	£	s.	d.
14 miles of tramroad through sandy country, at £362 per mile ...	5,068	0	0
10½ miles of tramroad through clay country, at £470 10s. per mile	4,940	5	0
Total	£10,008	5	0

For 24½ miles of road, giving an average of about £408 per mile.

Compared with the above is the estimated cost of metalling ten and a half miles of clay road, all the metal for which would be procured at the Palmerston end of the road, viz.:—Ten and a half miles of road metalled as a dray road, at £648, £6,804. The fourteen miles of sandy road, along which the draught will be always heavy, could not be metalled without first laying down a substratum of clay, the expense of which, added to that of the metal, would put the consideration of this work out of the question, and point to the construction of a wooden tramroad as the only reasonable means of affording, at a moderate cost, great facility for intercourse and traffic between Foxton as a port, and the district of Palmerston.

The subject is one which will demand careful consideration; but it is clear that many large and valuable districts will languish, and remain comparatively unknown and unimportant for a length of time, unless some such means as those above described are adopted to facilitate access to the interior of the country.

I write this in prospect of making a similar inspection and estimate for the road from Wanganui to Waitotara, which is said to offer equal facilities for the adoption of a wooden tramroad.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works,
Wellington.

JOHN BLACKETT,
Acting Engineer-in-Chief.

P.S.—I have purposely omitted at present the details of the estimates.—J.B.

No. 2.

EXTRACT from a Letter from Mr. BLACKETT to the Hon. Mr. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 3rd December, 1870.

I have the honor to report that I have inspected the inland line of road from Wanganui to Waitotara, with a view of determining whether a wooden tramway could be laid along it with advantage. I find that the grades and curves are too frequent to admit of the safe or economical working of a tramway; but the road if completed would make an excellent coach road, and could be opened for coach traffic in about seven weeks.

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I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works,
Wellington.

JOHN BLACKETT,
Acting Engineer-in-Chief.

No. 3.

EXTRACT from a Letter from Mr. BLACKETT to Mr. J. T. STEWART.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 13th February, 1871.

I am directed to inform you that a number of Scandinavian immigrants have arrived in Wellington, and that the Provincial Government propose to locate a portion of them (nineteen) in the Upper Manawatu district. Also, that it is the intention of the General Government to employ them in preparing materials for, and constructing a portion of, the tramway from Palmerston to Ngawhakarau. You will receive this through Mr. A. F. Halcombe, who accompanies the immigrants, and who will confer with you as to the exact locality in which to place them. During the first week or two