

they will be employed in housing themselves; and after that time, it is proposed that they should be employed in preparing materials for the tramway, say, sleepers and rails, keys, &c.; and when a stock of these is ready, some of them might be employed in preparing the formation of the tramroads, and laying sleepers and rails, ballasting, &c.

* * * * *

I have, &c.,

JOHN BLACKETT,

Acting Engineer-in-Chief.

John T. Stewart, Esq., District Engineer, Manawatu.

No. 4.

The PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, Wellington, to the Hon. Mr. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Provincial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 22nd April, 1871.

Having just returned from Manawatu, I have the honor to direct your attention to the absolute necessity which exists for pressing on the formation of the tramway from Palmerston to Ngawhakarau as rapidly as possible. Not only is the absence of this mode of communication a great hindrance to the settlement of the district, but the want of it renders the Government work between Palmerston and the Gorge far more expensive than need be, as the carriage of supplies is so costly and uncertain that workmen contracting must recoup themselves by obtaining a higher price for their work.

Speaking from general observation a few days ago, I can assure you that even a mountain range would present a less obstacle to the carriage of supplies than does the ten miles of dead level roadway to which I refer while it is in its present muddy state. With the traffic now on the road, which is daily increasing, there is no hope of improvement till the end of October next; indeed, the probability is that it will get much worse as the winter goes on. Even to horsemen along this road the passage is difficult and dangerous; and as a sample of the difficulties of carting, I saw three of the finest horses in the country come through the bush road thoroughly exhausted, having taken nearly ten hours to drag 7 cwt. a distance of ten miles.

During the summer months the road was pretty good, and the cost of carriage from Foxton to Palmerston (twenty-five miles), was £2 per ton. In consequence of the state of the last ten miles of this distance freight had increased to £6 per ton a fortnight ago, and now I am credibly informed, and I believe it, that £10 per ton will shortly be demanded, and have to be paid.

The moment the tramway is completed, even to Ngawhakarau, the cost of transit will at once be reduced to 30s. or even £1 per ton, from the port at Foxton to the township of Palmerston—the reason of the reduction being that one horse, driven by one man, can take with ease along a tramway a load of 5 tons at three miles an hour, a work which it would now take forty-two horses, and at least fourteen men, three times as long to perform.

This statement may at first sight appear absurd, the comparison is so striking; but I can assure you that it is fully supported by the facts of the case, and it is to prevent the lamentable waste of labour, equally injurious both to public and private interests, that I would urge the immediate completion of this part of the tramway at least, and it should, without any difficulty, be completed within the next three months.

I may observe that the state of the Palmerston-Ngawhakarau Road is not a singular instance of the inferiority of expensively formed roads which require metalling to make them available, as compared with the cheap wooden tram, as the pioneer road. From Palmerston to the Gorge, the newly formed road is equally impassable, and must remain so until after the summer suns shall have made the surface of the formation sufficiently solid to allow of the carting of gravel upon it.

I have, &c.,

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE,

Provincial Secretary.

The Hon. Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

No. 5.

Mr. KNOWLES to the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, Wellington.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 28th April, 1871.

I do myself the honor, by the direction of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, in which you call attention to the necessity which exists for pressing on the formation of the tramway now in progress from Palmerston to Ngawhakarau, and, in reply, to inform you that instructions have been given to Mr. Stewart, the engineer in charge, to have the work completed as rapidly as possible.

Mr. Stewart has also been instructed at once to prepare, for the consideration of the Government, specifications and estimates for a tramway from Ngawhakarau to Foxton; one condition of which is that the contractor shall have free use of the tramway from Palmerston to Ngawhakarau for the carriage of his timber.

I have, &c.,

JOHN KNOWLES,

Under Secretary.

A. F. Halcombe, Esq., Provincial Secretary,
Wellington.

No. 6.

The Hon. Mr. GISBORNE to Mr. J. T. STEWART.

(Telegram No. 259.)

Wellington, 22nd April, 1871.

PLEASE at once prepare specifications and estimates of tramway from Ngawhakarau to Foxton, and