

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

CONNECTING THE OXFORD LINE WITH MALVERN HILLS RAILWAY.

(MEMORIALS FOR AND AGAINST.)

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by the Hon. the Minister for Public Works.

THE MEMORIAL of the undersigned INHABITANTS of OXFORD to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS, Wellington, New Zealand,

Humbly Showeth,—

That but a comparatively short distance of railway is now required to connect the present Rangiora and Oxford line with the Malvern Hills Railway, and that the Provincial Government of Canterbury have already recognized the importance of this work by causing a survey to be made, and two alternative lines laid out, each crossing the Waimakariri Gorge at the site of the bridge, and also by appropriating a sum of £2,000, estimated to be one-fourth of the cost of the first four miles of the proposed extension.

That the material for the above-mentioned bridge is now on the way from England, and that the plan of construction is such as to render it fit to carry a narrow-gauge railway.

That the proposed line of railway will tap the most valuable portions of the forest, while at present the bulk of the available timber is at such a distance from the terminus as to make it a question, in many instances, whether, having to cart four or five miles to the railway station, it is not cheaper to cart the whole distance to Rangiora than to use the railway. And at the present time horse teams are carrying timber to Rangiora and Kaiapoi literally alongside the railway.

Your memorialists assert with confidence that the carrying out of the extension of the railway, or even of an instalment of it, would greatly increase the traffic upon the existing line, as the timber within a radius of several miles of the terminus is to a great extent exhausted.

Your memorialists venture to hope that the comparatively small sum necessary to carry out this work, of great importance not only to the inhabitants of this district but to all consumers of sawn timber, fencing materials, and firewood in all parts of the province (Oxford being the only forest adjacent to a line of railway), will induce the Government to cause the necessary steps to be taken during the present Session of the General Assembly to insure the extension of the railway with as little delay as possible.

And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

(Signed by)

DILNOT SLADDEN.

HENRY SEDCOLE.

FREDRICH LUERS.

RICHARD PEEHAM.

W. WADDINGTON.

G. E. WILLIS.

And 207 others.

Mr. D. FISHER to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Oxford, 18th September, 1875.

Being deputed by the persons who have signed the attached petition to forward it to you, I would respectfully draw your attention to the fact that it is signed only by the persons through whose lands it is proposed to form the railway extension, and who would be materially injured thereby; also, that only two persons (who got up a meeting for the purpose) are agitating for it, because one of them has seventy acres of bush and the other fifty-eight acres, think to benefit themselves at the public expense. These persons employed a man on horseback to go round for signatures to a memorial they got up, asking every one he met to sign it. We do not so much rely on the number of signatures to the attached petition as to the interests it represents.

We would therefore ask you, Sir, in the name of fair play, economy, and justice, to prevent this extension.

Apologising for troubling you,

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
DAVID FISHER.

To the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS, Wellington, the PETITION of the undersigned
FARMERS and RESIDENTS at WEST OXFORD,

Humbly Showeth,—

That we hear with alarm that certain owners of bush sections at Oxford are making efforts to induce the Government to extend the railway for a distance of four or five miles along the bush.

That if such extension takes place it will be utterly ruinous to us, as our sections will be so cut up as to render them valueless.

That only persons who have bush sections are agitating for this extension, and this regardless of expense that the country will be put to. Most of these sections will be worked out in two or three years, and the railway extension will then be a failure.

That the greatest distance the timber has to be carted to the present railway terminus is not more than five miles, and in some instances not more than half a mile from the saw-mills.

That the persons asking for this extension will require a platform and siding at every quarter of a mile, so that the expenses of working and salaries to be paid would far and away exceed the earnings of the line.

And, finally, that the railway accommodation at Oxford at the present time is quite sufficient for the wants of the district as a whole; and that this expenditure of public money, if it takes place, will be only for the benefit of five or six persons engaged in saw-mill business.

We therefore humbly hope that you will be so good as to disallow this extension; and your petitioners will, as in duty bound, ever pray.

(Signed)

DAVID FISHER, Farmer.
ISAAC MURCH, Butcher.
JOHN MULRIE, Farmer.
WILLIAM PAGET, Carrier.
And 30 others.