

No. 60.

Messrs. BLAIR and CONYERS to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS, Wellington.
DUNEDIN GOODS STATION SITE.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 30th July, 1878.

In reply to your separate memoranda of the 17th instant, and your subsequent verbal instructions to report jointly, we have the honor to submit the following report on the two sites proposed:—

Northern Site (A).—The Castle Street plan commences at Castle Street, the northern boundary of the present station, and runs northward to Hanover Street.

Southern Site (B).—The Crawford Street plan commences at Jetty Street, and extends southward towards the Anderson's Bay Road. It is, however, proposed to utilize such portions of the Crawford Street Block between Rattray and Jetty Streets as have not been leased by the Harbour Board.

Area and Accommodation.

So far as area and general accommodation are concerned the sites are, to all intents and purposes equal.

Locality in relation to Working.

Inasmuch as it is nearer the passenger station and the proposed import dock, the northern site has the advantage, particularly if that portion of Castle Street between High and Willis Streets is closed up. The Railway Department does not, however, lay much stress on this. The passenger and goods traffic are worked entirely separate, consequently, so far as management and working are concerned, it is not necessary that they should be close together, and the general manager thinks it an advantage to have the goods station at some little distance from the docks.

Locality in relation to the Accommodation afforded to the Public.

This is the main point in the whole question; consequently we have given it careful consideration in all its bearings. If determined by its proximity to the centre of the city, the northern site has a decided advantage. It is almost exactly midway between the northern and southern extremities, whereas the southern site is nearly three-quarters of a mile distant from the centre. But, if we include the populous parts of the flat and the North-East Valley in the area to be accommodated, the southern site is equally central; it is midway between the North-East Valley Townships and the Forbury, the limits of the flat land. The site of the goods station is, however, of comparatively little importance to any but the business portion of the community, so it is necessary to show where this class is located. It is well known that practically the whole of the wholesale establishments are south of Stuart Street, and probably seven-eighths of the whole are south of Dowling Street. The southern site is, therefore, more convenient to them. The business part of Dunedin is for all practical purposes included in the blocks between Manor and Dowling Streets, and the position of the greater portion of the goods sheds in the southern site will be exactly midway between those points. Even if the Customhouse is taken as the centre, it still leaves a balance of about 10 chains in favour of the southern as against the northern site.

General Comparisons.

In addition to the foregoing, there are several general points of comparison between the sites that require consideration. There is a reasonable probability of that portion of Castle Street between High and Willis Streets being closed, which is an advantage in the northern site, in so much as it allows uninterrupted communication between the passenger and goods stations. On the other hand, there is little chance of Rattray Street being closed, consequently the communications with the southern site must always be carried on across the street.

The southern site has an advantage in being to a certain extent available now; there is a site for a large goods shed already reclaimed near the Harbour Office. The present station is too confined already, so it is quite possible that a regular block may take place when the lines are connected north and south, except additional accommodation is provided beforehand.

The southern site can be reclaimed faster than the northern one, it being proposed to obtain the material from the sandhills at the Ocean Beach, the most convenient place near Dunedin.

Several conferences have taken place between representatives of the Dunedin Corporation, the Otago Harbour Board, and the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce. Although they have never pronounced in favour of the particular site now under consideration, the decision has invariably been in favour of having the goods shed south of Rattray Street.

Conclusion.

After comparing the individual merits of each site as above described, we have come to the conclusion that there is not very much difference between them. We are of opinion that the advantages of situation, and the short time required to make it available, gives a balance in favour of the southern site; but the preponderance is so slight that it might be overruled by other considerations—a choice might be made independently of the questions of engineering or railway management.

Harbour Board's Plan.

Since getting your memoranda, the Hon. Mr. Stout has referred to us a fresh plan by Mr. Simpson. The passenger station is placed on an angle across Castle Street, between Stuart and Rattray Streets, commencing at Stuart Street Jetty and ending near the new railway store in Rattray Street.

The goods station commences at Rattray Street, and extends southwards towards Anderson's Bay Road, its western boundary being in a line with the Harbour Offices. The only serious objection we have to it is that it encroaches about seven chains on the limit of reclamation fixed by Sir John Coode; in fact, it is in modification of the "Conference Plan" condemned by him.