

If you could for our private information give us a sight of the drawings and specification of the American-made engines on the New Zealand railways, we should esteem it a great favour.

Messrs. Hemans, Falkiner, and Tancred.

We are, &c.,

NEILSON AND CO.

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MEMORANDUM.

We sent Messrs. Neilson and Co. a copy of the specifications of the engines lately made in America, with a request that they would consider confidential the prices and other details. We enclose their reply just received.

Trusting that this correspondence may be of interest and value to the Government,

We are, &c.,

HEMANS, FALKINER, AND TANCRED.

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Enclosure 3 in No. 3.

Messrs. NEILSON and Co. to Messrs. HEMANS, FALKINER, and TANCRED.

DEAR SIRS,— Hyde Park Locomotive Works, Glasgow, 29th November, 1878.

We are exceedingly obliged by receipt of yours of 28th instant, enclosing specification of American engines, which we are having copied.

From the hurried glance we have taken of the specification, we can state that we would have been very glad to have taken the contract at a very much lower figure than Evans's price.

We have, &c.,

NEILSON AND CO.,

(per Thomas W. Chalmers.)

Messrs. Hemans, Falkiner, and Tancred.

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Enclosure 4 in No. 3.

The VULCAN FOUNDRY COMPANY to Messrs. HEMANS, FALKINER, and TANCRED.

GENTLEMEN,— Lancashire, 28th November, 1878.

We beg to acknowledge receipt of, and to thank you for, the memorandum you have been good enough to send us in reference to American locomotives in use on the New Zealand railways.

We must confess that we are not sufficiently cosmopolitan in our ideas to learn without feelings of sorrow that we may probably ere long be driven from yet another field of operations which we might naturally almost call our own.

Without inquiring too closely into the causes which have made a report so antagonistic to the interests of English manufactures possible, we should much like to know whether our transatlantic competitors built these particular engines to a specification and drawings supplied, or whether the design and carrying out of details was a matter left entirely to themselves.

We suppose the latter, in which case we submit the comparison between ourselves and the American builders is most unfair.

We are prepared to admit that the American type of engine—we allude particularly to the "bogie" principle, and more especially to the "Bissel" form of same—is certainly better adapted to the nature of the curves and permanent way usually prevailing in our colonies than the rigid wheel base of our English engines; but such is the absurd conservatism existing in this country that any departure from existing types would not be entertained, and we know that it is only within a comparatively recent period that any of our locomotive engineers would tolerate the "bogie" system on their lines of railway. If English builders are compelled to adhere to a particular type and specification of an engine, they surely cannot be held responsible for its performances or failures. So much for design.

In reference to "attention to details and general excellence in workmanship," we will couple these, and can only say that we have yet to learn that the palm has been wrested from our hands. On the contrary we are still under the impression, from all we have heard, read, or seen, that English work is not only equal but superior to that turned out by American manufacturers.

As to first cost, permit us to remark the American houses possess an immense advantage over us, from the simple fact of their being able to supply standard types, for which special appliances may economically be provided, whereas in this country every locomotive engineer is guided by and follows only his "own sweet will." This adhesion to a particular type also enables the producer to deliver engines at the shortest possible notice, which often is of paramount importance, and would frequently be the means of securing an order.

The American type of engine, specification remaining the same, could be built as substantial, accurate in workmanship, and we believe in quality, as cheaply in this country as in the United States of America.

We are, &c.,

THE VULCAN FOUNDRY COMPANY (LIMITED),  
(per Edward Bretteth, Manager.)

Messrs. Hemans, Falkiner, and Tancred.

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