

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

BONUS OF £500 TO MR. CONYERS

(CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING PAYMENT OF A, IN AUGUST, 1879).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, with the leave of the House.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Office of the Commissioner of Railways (Middle Island),
Christchurch, 18th June, 1879.

I HAVE the honor to submit, for the favour of your approval, a voucher for the bonus which you were so good as to promise me last July in lieu of an increase of salary, it being your opinion that it would be more convenient that increased remuneration (which you were pleased to consider me entitled to) should take the shape of an annual bonus rather than of an addition to my salary.

I have ventured to put the bonus at £500. I do not, however, presume to dictate, or even to suggest, but desire, in respect of the amount, to place myself entirely in your hands. I trust, however, it will not be considered out of place for me to direct your attention to the remuneration which is paid in England to General Managers of Railways, whose position and functions are precisely analogous to those of Commissioners of Railways in the colony. But first I may state that I have had disadvantages and difficulties to contend with which General Managers in England know nothing of. They, on taking office, find ready to their hand an organized system, machinery in perfect working order, and an experienced and thoroughly-trained and competent staff to carry on the duty; while I, on first taking charge in the South, had to organize and instruct a staff, and, when my charge was extended further northward, I had to contend with disorder and ill-discipline and incompetency; and it has devolved upon me again to create a staff, and that out of the most unpromising materials. It is a fact that, where I had one man who possessed a little knowledge of railway work, I had a dozen who had everything to learn.

The General Manager of the Great Northern Railway a few years ago received a salary of £3,500 per annum, and, as the tendency of salaries is rather to advance than to recede, that officer is probably now still more highly paid. The General Managers of the London and North-Western Railway and of the Great Western Railway are remunerated on an equally liberal scale. The Managing Director of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway (Mr. J. S. Forbes, who is General Manager under a different title) is said to receive a salary of £7,000 a year. In this case I am not prepared to vouch for the exact amount, but it is certain that Mr. Forbes is paid a very handsome honorarium. Again, the Manager and Secretary of a small railway in the West of England (only 76 miles long) received, some years ago, £1,200 a year. But I need not go on multiplying cases.

I do not refer to the salaries which are paid in these instances as affording any index to the remuneration which Commissioners of Railways in this colony are entitled to expect, but simply to show the value which is set in England on the acquirements, qualifications, and experience which enable a man to administer successfully the affairs of a large system of railways.

WM. CONYERS,
Commissioner of Railways, Middle Island.