

## Sub-Enclosure.

## MEMORANDUM of History of Project and of present aspect of Case.

In 1869 a large number of people, believing that a water race from the Mikonui river to supply the gold workings at Ross would be remunerative, joined together to make a survey of the work, with the view of forming a company for its construction, with the expected aid of a subsidy from the Westland County Council, under the then existing regulations for aiding such enterprises. A copy of which regulations is attached.

A survey was accordingly made of the route now known as the "Mikonui Route." The general results of this survey were as follows:—That the total length of race would be a little over twenty miles, and its probable cost about £45,000. That there would be a good deal of timber work upon it, and that it would be subject to land slips, and rather expensive to maintain; also doubtful if the ground would hold in the water, being in some places very porous.

Many attempts were made by the late Mr. G. H. Tribe (then M.H.R. for Totara District), and others interested, to float a company, but without success.

The next step taken (the plans of Mikonui route having meantime become property of Government) was, in 1872, when Mr. James Brogden was contemplating the construction of it on behalf of his firm, in consideration of certain concessions (*vide* enclosures) to be made in the form of land grants. After some investigation, however, the matter fell through. A copy of a report by Mr. O'Connor, C.E., made at this time for Mr. Brogden's information, is attached.

The following is an abstract statement of the then aspect of case as given in report:—Cost for a forty-head race, £45,000; cost for a ten-head race, £18,000. That expenditure would probably recoup itself at end of twelve years, and that thereafter it might be expected to yield £10,000 a year for twenty or thirty years more.

As above stated, Mr. Brogden did not pursue the matter, but it was urged on the attention of the General Government, and a vote of £2,000 was taken in 1874 for a resurvey of the race, with a view to obtaining the absolutely best line. This survey was made in the early part of 1875, and its result was the abandonment of the Mikonui route, above alluded to, and the adoption of what is called the Totara route. The survey was reported upon on 27th August, 1875, by Mr. O'Connor, from whose reports the following particulars are abstracted:—

*Totara route.*—Total length, 15 miles 54 chains 61 links; estimated cost, £81,000; capacity estimated for fifty heads. Its advantages over the other routes are:—(1st.) Being much shorter. (2nd.) Being much easier maintained. As to the probable returns from the race, Mr. O'Connor refers to his report, for Mr. Brogden's information, before referred to.

At this stage it may be well to call attention to the fact that a prominent feature about this Totara route is what is known as the "Long Tunnel," and is frequently referred to in the papers on the subject. This, as will be seen, on reference to the plan of the race, is necessary, in order to pass from the valley of the Totara into that of Donnelly's Creek. It will be about two miles long, and will cost about £20,000.

The survey having been completed, and the report sent in, a vote of £6,000 was taken in the session of 1875, and in the November of that year the Hon. Mr. Richardson, then Minister for Public Works, directed that Mr. O'Connor should report on the best way to spend this money, and should also ascertain, from the local authorities, whether they would give the gold fields revenue of the district as a pledge for its construction. As to the first question, Mr. O'Connor, in his report to Engineer-in-Chief, on 11th December, 1875, says:—

"With respect to the best means of utilising the £6,000 for this work, which is at present voted, I have gone carefully into the question, and hoped at one time that I might have been able to meet the views of the inhabitants of the district in suggesting some practical method by which the portion of the race line, near Ross, could be constructed forthwith and turned to immediate advantage towards draining the flat. This, however, I find, on investigation, is not practicable, as it would take at least two heads of water running constantly to be of any use, and a reservoir capable of holding that quantity of water for sixty days (which it would have to do, as it might not be practicable to get water to fill it at intervals of less than sixty days) would be a costly work in the most favorable situation, and particularly costly in the situation in question. I have come to the conclusion, therefore, that no part of the race can be made practically available until it is all completed to the Mikonui, and I would recommend that the long tunnel should be pushed ahead with all possible speed, and that the remainder of the works should be kept in abeyance till it is necessary to commence them, in order to have them completed contemporaneously with the tunnel, viz., until the tunnel is half through, or thereabouts."

As to the Hon. Mr. Richardson's second question, a public meeting was held at Ross, on the 4th December, 1875, presided over by his Honor the Superintendent of Westland, and it was resolved that the inhabitants were in favor of pledging the gold fields revenue as security for the construction of the race.

It is not on record, however, that the revenue was ever actually dedicated to that purpose, or that this pledge was the basis of any further arrangements.

Instructions were issued in February, 1876, to go on with the long tunnel, and tenders were called, first for a part, and afterwards for the whole of it, but without any practical result, as the first contractors threw up their contracts, and Government did not accept any tender on the latter occasion, tender being too high. This was in December, 1876.

Up to this time it will be observed that no other proposal for commencing work, except by starting long tunnel, had been acted upon. The action taken from the end of 1876, to July, 1879, was as follows:—

"The Immigration and Public Works Appropriation Act, 1877," clauses 9 to 12 inclusive, provides for the Government advancing half the cost of the race, excluding the long tunnel, provided the local bodies guarantee 3 per cent. on the outlay. No practical result followed this provision.