

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST INSPECTOR OF MANGAONOHO
SECTION OF RAILWAY

(PAPERS RELATING TO).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 30th July, 1891.

Ordered, "That copies of the complaints made by the contractor against the Inspector of the Mangaonoho section of railway, together with all correspondence thereon, be laid before this House."—(MR. DUTHIE.)

No. 1.

MESSRS. CLEGHORN, FORREST, and MAGEE, Contractors, to the RESIDENT ENGINEER,
Palmerston North.

SIR,—

Rangatira, Hunterville, 21st March, 1891.

We beg to bring before you a few grievances against Mr. Campbell our Inspector.

1. In your presence he examined two trucks of gravel, which he said was not so good as it ought to be, but did not condemn it. But after we had carted it on to the works at considerable expense he then condemned it.

2. According to his instructions we sent men to wash the gravel in the river. When this lot reached Rangatira Station he refused to inspect it, and as he had in the meantime condemned all we had already carted, we had to suspend carting and unload trucks on station ground at extra expense.

3. We requested him to allow us to hire a trap to drive him to Porewa, ten miles distant, to see our process of washing, and also to inspect eleven truck-loads which were there. Though he consented to this, after we had driven him there, he refused even to look at the gravel on the trucks, at the same time well knowing he would not have another opportunity for some time, and also that delay was a serious loss to us. The consequence is we have thereby lost the only spell of good weather so far this season.

4. We also sent for fencers, who did the fencing on the Ashurst line under him, and as far as we could ascertain, from inquiries, they had given satisfaction with their work. But he (Mr. Campbell) told us he warned us that if we employed those men there would be no end of trouble while they were on the work, without giving any reason whatever.

5. We cannot get timber or fencing-posts from any one; the reason assigned being that they will not supply us if Mr. Campbell is Inspector, unless the posts are first passed in the bush, as no one knows what he will pass.

6. He has definitely expressed a personal bias against our Mr. Cleghorn, saying, "Keep him off the job altogether," thereby showing his usual tendency to strife and unwarrantable interference.

The above charges, which we are ready to substantiate, place us at a serious disadvantage in our carrying out our contract. Indeed, with such actions, no reasonable price would be sufficient to do the concrete. The gravel he refused to inspect has since been passed by your Inspector, Mr. McMasters, and had it been done by Mr. Campbell, in the first instance, it would have saved us much expense and wrong. His general bearing towards us is tyrannical, abusive, and uncivil—in fact, such as no individual could tolerate from another without being at continual strife.

Sir, this is a very serious matter to us, and we hope you will see fit to appoint us a new Inspector that strife may be avoided.

G. L. Cook, Esq., Resident Engineer,
Palmerston North.

We are, &c.,

CLEGHORN, FORREST, AND MAGEE.

No. 2.

The ACTING ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the RESIDENT ENGINEER, Palmerston North.

Public Works Office, Wellington, 14th April, 1891.

The Resident Engineer, Palmerston North.

RE Mangaonoho contract—complaints against Inspector Campbell: A copy of the letter from the contractors for the above-mentioned contract to yourself, dated the 21st March last, making sundry

allegations against Inspector Campbell, has been brought under the notice of the Minister, who desires to have a report from you thereon for his information. Will you therefore kindly report on the matter at your early convenience accordingly, after personally examining into the several matters complained of as far as possible, and interviewing the contractors on the subject in the presence of the Inspector.

WILLIAM H. HALES, Acting Engineer-in-Chief.

No. 3.

The RESIDENT ENGINEER to the ACTING ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

Public Works Office, Palmerston North, 12th May, 1891.

The Acting Engineer-in-Chief.

RE Mangaonoho contract—complaints against Inspector Campbell: In reply to your memorandum No. 88/1075, of the 14th ultimo, as directed by you, I have personally examined into the several matters complained of in the contractors' letter to me of the 21st March, and interviewed them at length on the subject in the presence of the Inspector on the 24th ultimo. Without going into the detail of the various allegations the contractors were unable to substantiate any of them, and admitted that they had written the letter under the irritation produced by the rejection of their materials. On my pointing out that Mr. Campbell had simply done his duty, they confessed to having been hasty in their action, and afterwards wrote me to that effect (see copy of letter herewith). I had, previously to the receipt of your memorandum, satisfied myself that the allegations were groundless, and wrote contractors accordingly (copy of my letter herewith). At the outset of the contract, Mr. Campbell had the unpleasant duty of rejecting materials which were unquestionably bad. This action was resented by Mr. Forrest in a very objectionable manner, hence much friction arose and the contractors' letter. I have found Mr. Campbell to be fair, zealous, and courteous in manner. He has acted with my entire approval, and I have complete confidence in him.

G. L. Cook, Resident Engineer.

Enclosure 1 in No. 3.

Messrs. Cleghorn, Forrest, and Magee.

Palmerston North, 26th March, 1891.

IN reply to your letter of the 12th instant, making complaints of Mr. Campbell, the Inspector appointed to supervise your Mangaonoho contract: Having myself inspected the material condemned by Mr. Campbell I think he was justified in his action, and that you yourselves are solely to blame if you have sustained any loss. In stating that Mr. Campbell has personal bias against Mr. Cleghorn you are entirely mistaken, but in stating that his bearing is tyrannical, abusive, and uncivil, you are making a serious charge against an official of long service and high character, and I cannot but think you have misconstrued his manner and remarks he may have made under irritating circumstances, as I am sure he is incapable of such conduct as you attribute to him, and is actuated by no other desire than to see the contract faithfully carried out. It rests entirely with yourselves that the contract should go on without friction, and this is to be done by carrying on the works in accordance with the specification. I hope you will see your way to meet the wishes of Mr. Campbell in future, as I am satisfied that he will not call upon you to do other than you have bound yourselves by contract to do.

G. L. Cook, Resident Engineer.

Enclosure 2 in No. 3.

SIR,—

Rangatira, 27th April, 1891.

Since Mr. Campbell has been regularly upon the works things have been working satisfactorily, consequently we have no desire to press the charges against him further. After more mature deliberation we think we were hasty in making the charges, and, with your permission, we now beg to withdraw them.

Trusting there may be no occasion to cause you further trouble,

We are, &c.,

G. L. Cook, Esq., Resident Engineer, P.W.

CLEGHORN, FORREST, AND MAGEE.

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