



NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

(PROVINCE OF NELSON).

Published by Authority.

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By His Honor's command,

J. C. RICHMOND, Provincial Secretary.

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NELSON, TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 1863.

No. 9.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, APRIL, 21, 1863.

THE Tenth Session of the Provincial Council was opened this day, at One o'clock, upon which the following Address of the Superintendent was delivered:—

MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL—

1. In opening this Council for several years past, I have had reason to congratulate you on the steady and substantial progress of the Province, but at no time have I been better justified in doing so than on the present occasion. Prosperity and contentment prevail among all classes in an increasing degree, and the Revenue during the past year has not only equalled, but considerably exceeded my estimates.

The total Customs Receipts, exclusive of Gold Duty, for the year ended on the 31st March last, amounted to £20,490 10s. 2d., of which the Provincial Treasurer has received £6,583 5s. 1d.; the Land Revenue for the same period was £55,818 4s. 4d., exclusive of £2,762 0s. 3d., paid to the Central Board of Education; the Duty on Exported Gold was £1,055 14s. 11d., which, with the item of revenue, "Miscellaneous," £7,885 10s. 7d., gives a total of £74,104 15s. 2d., being £34,664 2s. 0d., above the Total Revenue of the preceding year.

The Land Sales of the past year show conclusively the general prosperity. As usual, the

greater part of the purchases consists of large pastoral tracts; but in addition to the large quantity of this sort of Land, many thousand acres have been bought in moderate and small blocks outside the pastoral districts, which I understand will be principally converted into artificial pasture; a mode of investment which will, I am satisfied, be profitable to the individual, and increase the public wealth. My Estimate of Revenue for the current year, with the balance now in the Treasury, will give a sum of about £70,000 available for present appropriation. Out of this, at least £43,000 may be devoted to Public Works.

2. The sums which for several years have been voted for Explorations, are at length in a fair way of yielding returns equal to my hopes. In the year 1859, I engaged Mr. J. Mackay, jun., to explore for a road to the West Coast of the Province. That gentleman found, and reported on, a line by which a road might be made to the Grey River. In the same year, Mr. John Rochfort was engaged to make a survey of the Coast, from the Grey River to a point eight miles north of the Buller, and a traverse of the principal rivers of the adjoining district.

Whilst this work was in progress, I engaged Mr. Haast, with whom was associated Mr. James Burnett, to make a topographical and geological examination of the south-western districts. The reports of these gentlemen have been laid before you, and support the view of Mr. Brunner, the first explorer of that part of the island, that a good road through the Buller Valley was almost hopeless. But in that portion of Mr. Haast's Report which treats of Roads and Passes, he stated his opinion that a pass might be found by the Wangapeka and Owen Valleys, and so down to the Buller. In the hope that this might

prove to be the case, I despatched explorers in that direction, and the result was that Mr. Skeet blazed a track up the Valley of the Tadmor, and down that of a river which he called the Hope, to a point where it joins the Buller, eight miles north-east of the junction of the River Owen. Mr. Burnett was despatched to report on this line, and found that, though it was creditable to the explorer's skill, it struck the Buller Valley too far to the eastward to have any advantage over the line already known by way of Lake Arthur.

After this ill success, I resolved to fall back on the latter line and engaged Mr. Skeet to open a track, at once, from the Lake country, keeping as close as practicable to the valley of the Buller, in order to open the numerous valleys to the south of that river. He succeeded in this work till he reached the Brunner range, between the Maruia and Inangahua or Thackeray valleys; but here a most difficult rocky barrier, already described by Mr. Brunner, opposed his further progress.

3. Matters were at this point when a few months ago large deposits of gold were discovered in the valley of the Lyell, a tributary on the north of the Buller, and this, coupled with the well grounded expectation that other northern tributaries would prove as rich, induced me to make another effort to find a shorter route to the middle of the Buller, in the general direction already suggested by Mr. Haast, and still more definitely by Mr. Rochfort. I sent out Mr. Rochfort, whose previous acquaintance with the particular district qualified him in an especial way for the service. His Reports on this important exploration, with a sketch map of the country he traversed, will be laid before you. The result promises to be of vital importance to the interests of the Province. Fair success has been obtained in the immediate object, and the Valley of the Karamea, which it is probable is highly auriferous, has moreover been made accessible from the land side. But the most important result has been the additional knowledge obtained of the extent of the West Coast Coal Field, which is found by Mr. Rochfort reaching to the source of the Wangapeka River, and perhaps even nearer Nelson, and occupying a position which he considers to be accessible from this Port.

4. This leads me to another subject. In addressing you last Session, I referred to examinations, then being made by Mr. Burnett, in the Grey Coal Field near the Buller River, and into the capabilities of the latter river as a port of shipment. During the Session, Mr. Burnett's preliminary Report was laid before you. He has since continued his examinations and surveyed another portion of the field at the River Mokihini, still further north. His very full reports, with explanatory engravings, will be laid before you. To complete this inquiry into the means and the place for opening the Coal Field, the Provincial Engineer set out, as soon as his numerous and pressing duties would allow, to examine the line of a tramway, proposed by Mr. Burnett, between the mines and the port at the Buller. The engineer's instructions were, after finishing this examination to return overland, inspecting on his way the track down the Buller Valley marked by Mr. Skeet. Some little time must, however, elapse before his reports can be laid before you.

Believing that you would concur with me in the opinion that the Land Regulations referring to the disposal of our Mineral Lands must fail to secure a fair share of this wealth for public purposes, and to provide for speedily working these valuable mines, I applied to the General Government for a Reserve of this part of the Coal Field, and the land has been accordingly granted, under the "Public Reserves

Act, 1856." It will be for you to determine the principles and regulations under which this valuable reserve shall be dealt with, and propositions respecting it will be submitted to you early in the Session.

To make sure that the opening of the Coal Field should be no longer delayed, I thought it right, in the absence of sufficient available private capital, to apply to His Excellency's Government to sanction the introduction of a Loan Bill, under which a sum of £50,000 might be raised for the necessary works by the Provincial Government, and I have obtained its assent.

5. Whilst awaiting the Engineer's Report on the Coal Field at the Buller, and on the practicability of making a road for general traffic along Mr. Skeet's line, I have thought it right to construct that part of the track nearest Nelson, in order to open several valleys adjacent to the occupied district, and to facilitate the carriage of stores towards the auriferous country. This work is under the direction of Mr. Brunner, the Chief Surveyor, and is progressing satisfactorily. I thought that the attractions of the Western Gold Fields were very likely to bring a large number of diggers to the Province during the next few months, and already the influx has begun. Under these circumstances, I felt also justified in acting, at once, on the new topographical information which Mr. Rochfort's report supplies, and several tracks are being made on his suggestion in the Wangapeka, Lyell, and Karamea valleys, suitable through a considerable part of their length for pack-horses. Mr. Rochfort has charge of these works. By them not only will an alternative and more direct line to the Lower Buller be provided but a large district, in all probability auriferous, will be made at once accessible; so as to furnish occupation for a considerable digging population. I trust that in a month from this time the Lyell diggings will be connected with Nelson by this route; and that in six weeks or two months the Valley of the Karamea, and the level land on the mouth of that river, will cease to be isolated from the rest of the province.

I have also had a track cut from the end of the main road at Collingwood to the mouth of the River Heaphy, and I have further the satisfaction of informing you that a track is open from the Amuri to the Grey Plain, and has been used by two settlers, now established in the Grey district, who drove their flocks of sheep across with very trifling loss. The means of communication inland between the town of Nelson and the West Coast districts stand, then, thus: the northern part can be reached by Collingwood and the Aorere Valley; the southern by the Wairau Gorge, the Hanmer Plain, and valleys tributary to the Waiau-ua and Grey Rivers; whilst the centre will be accessible in a few weeks at several points through the Wangapeka pass. Nor am I altogether without hope that a road by the Buller valley itself will be found available, by the Provincial Engineer's careful and laborious examination, which already has overcome one of the great difficulties of the line.

6. Under the circumstances, which I have now fully laid before you, it would be premature to introduce the contemplated Loan Bill, until reports and estimates shall have been furnished on the possibility and cost of approaching the newly discovered portion of the Coal Fields from the side of Nelson. The advantage of this, if practicable, is too obvious to be more than alluded to. In contemplation of the possibility of large works, including a railway of narrow gauge, suited for locomotives, being undertaken on this side, in preference to those smaller ones proposed at the Buller, I have therefore already written to ask the General Government to sanction an increase

of the amount to be raised by loan, and to allow a more comprehensive appropriation of the money to the opening of the Coal Field, wherever it may prove most advantageous. There has not yet been time for a reply to this application. In the meanwhile, the whole subject will naturally receive your closest attention.

7. The sum voted for plans and estimates of a proposed railway to the Wairoa Bridge has been expended, and the Report and plans of Mr. FitzGibbon, the engineer of the Dun Mountain Company, will be placed in your hands. These documents will be of great use in considering the larger enterprises which I have just brought under your notice.

8. The General Government has issued a circular inviting the Provincial Governments to join in the construction of an Electric Telegraph throughout this Island. The advantages to Commerce, to the administration of justice, and to affairs generally, both public and private, which this instrument will afford, are to be had at such a comparatively trifling cost, and the proposals of the General Government are so equitable, that I think you will be able readily to accede to them.

9. In connection with any large expenditure for Public Works, it will be right to consider the subject of Immigration. Here we have an opportunity of doing something to supply a shortcoming, with which I think we are chargeable as a community, in reference to our distressed fellow-countrymen at home, my attention has been particularly directed to this matter by a letter from a Society, now being formed, in England to assist emigration to the British Colonies, from which it appears that the general want of employment in the spinning and weaving trades, is compelling many of the artizans to endeavor to leave the mother country. When the Estimates are laid before you, you will find a proposal to devote a sum of £5,000 to Immigration, a portion of which may be applied to assisting necessitous persons of this class to settle among us. Holding as I do the opinion that the Waste Lands of the Colonies are not the private estate of the first settlers, but a trust for the whole British nation, I would gladly see a part of them devoted to this purpose, if any plan can be devised by which moderate grants can be made to deserving and distressed people from the manufacturing districts, who are suffering from political convulsions, or changes in the course of trade and fashion. I think you will agree with me that it is our sacred duty, and should be our pride, to exert ourselves actively and judiciously to help our countrymen,

whose patience and self-respect under protracted and grievous privation have won the admiration of the whole civilised world.

10. A Bill to Amend the Education Act has been drafted by your own instructions and will be introduced at once. With one important feature, namely, that which would authorise the raising of extra local rates by the householders of any District where it is desired to increase the scanty salary of the teacher in the Public School, I cordially agree; and acting on a request made to me by the Central Board of Education, I propose to ask an extra vote for Education this Session, that more adequate remuneration, which the state of markets and of wages in other occupations loudly calls for, may not be delayed until the Bill can be made law and put into operation.

11. A Bill to prevent the spread of Scab among Sheep has been drawn, and, as it embodies the experience of some of the largest and most successful flockowners in the Province, I have little doubt it will receive your careful attention.

12. The Waste Lands Regulations Amendment Bill of your last Session, after passing without serious alteration through the House of Representatives, was rejected by the Legislative Council. Any Bill affecting Crown Land is necessarily very long in becoming law, and as the meeting of the General Assembly is probably distant, in order to take advantage of the latest experience, I propose to defer the subject till your next Session, which will be summoned early enough to enable you to consider the matter before the Assembly meets again.

13. You will be asked to vote a large sum this year for the amendment and of the Surveys, and the establishment of Trigonometrical Stations throughout the country, by which means errors of any magnitude will be prevented in future. Most of you must have personal knowledge how urgently this work is needed, and the large funds available this year encourage us to deal promptly with a growing evil.

14. You will also be asked to legislate for the purpose of obtaining funds for supplying this town with water. The propositions to be laid before you for this purpose, will be based on enquiries made by yourselves in a former Session, and on the assent of a large part of those interested in the matter.

Gentlemen, I now leave you to your deliberations, and declare this Council open for the despatch of business.

J. P. ROBINSON,
Superintendent.