



NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE
(PROVINCE OF NELSON).

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By His Honor's command,

ALFRED GREENFIELD, Provincial Secretary.

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NELSON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH, 14, 1866.

No. 6.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 1866.

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

MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL—

1. In meeting you for the first time after a general Provincial Election, I may be permitted to express the gratification it affords me to again observe such a large proportion of those who have represented the various districts of this province for many years, and whose re-election proves how generally satisfactory their proceedings in Council have been to the majority of the electors, whilst it also demonstrates in the most conclusive manner how little is to be feared from any love of reckless innovation or any deficiency of a judicious amount of the conservative element amongst a settled community where the suffrage is practically so nearly universal.

2.—I have called you together before the expiration of the financial year, and I fear a little before the arrival of that season most convenient to a majority of the country members, but the important alterations in the population, the resources and

requirements of the Province, the wide deviations I have consequently felt myself called upon to make from your last year's appropriation of the revenue, and the very great responsibilities which I have in various ways incurred, would no longer permit me to proceed with the government of this Province without seeking your advice and your sanction.

3.—Immediately after the prorogation of the Council in July last year, the discovery of gold in large quantity in the neighborhood of the Grey attracted a population of several thousand persons to the south-western extremity of this Province, and the satisfactory yield of the Gold-fields in that portion of our territory has caused a steady increase in the mining population of the West Coast up to the present time. Not less than from six to eight thousand persons are now occupied in gold-mining pursuits within the Province, and the population for which you have to legislate is probably greater by at least fifty per cent. than that which has demanded the consideration of any previous Council in Nelson.

4.—Having satisfied myself by personal inspection of the gold-bearing territory of the Province that a large gold-mining population could be maintained upon it for many years, I did not hesitate to take upon myself the responsibility of promptly expending all the revenue derived from the Gold-fields in the construction of roads and such other permanent improvements as were calculated to render them

accessible and attractive, and in the maintenance of such wardens, constables, and other officers as appeared indispensable for the preservation of order and the security of life and property. A strict discharge of your duty will lead you to carefully inquire into the manner and circumstances under which such a large amount of unauthorised expenditure has been incurred, and I have directed every document to be laid before you that will be calculated to facilitate such an inquiry; but I have the utmost confidence that an intelligent view of the interests of the province will not only lead you to sanction the past, but also to see the importance of placing the Executive Government of the Province in a position to take a similar amount of responsibility upon itself under any equally urgent and unforeseen circumstances that may arise in the future.

5. The great necessity which such a sudden accession of population in such a rugged and previously little known country, created for wharves, roads, and other public works, pointed out the neighborhood of the Grey as the locality where the Provincial Engineer would be chiefly required, and as it was also indispensable that so important and distant a portion of the province should be presided over by a gentleman in whose hands the Government would be justified in placing large discretionary powers, I naturally sought the services of Mr. Blackett to act in the capacity of Gold Warden in addition to that of Engineer, and although the combination of offices placed too much work upon one individual, Mr. Blackett was enabled during his retention of the wardenship to give the most complete satisfaction to the Government, and to command a very unusual amount of approbation and respect from the population amongst which he performed his duties.

6. For a detailed account of the extensive and useful public works that have been completed in the Grey District during the current financial year, I must refer you to the important report of the Provincial Engineer, by which you will see that at Cobden a wharf has been erected, 250 feet long by 25 feet wide. From this wharf to the sea-beach a mile of dray-road has been formed, drained, bridged, and metalled through a densely wooded, swampy, and rugged country, and the cross streets have been cleared. A court-house, a storehouse, a lock-up, and a substantial bonded store, including office for Postmaster, and other rooms have also been erected. At the Twelve-Mile Landing a township has been laid off, the main streets cleared one chain wide, and the necessary buildings and other conveniences erected for making it the principal station for the Police force on the West Coast.

In addition to these public works no less than 115 miles of new road have been opened up in connection with the Grey Gold-fields. Sixty-one miles of which are available for horses. Such results have only been obtained by a considerable concentration of our available funds, and the attention of the Provincial Engineer being somewhat exclusively devoted to the newly developed portion of our province, in consequence of which many highly desirable public works in other districts have been necessarily postponed.

7. The steady increase of our gold duty and Customs revenue has, however, continued to justify the liberal treatment of our gold-fields, and cannot, I think, fail to show that the interests of the province will eventually be best promoted by offering every reasonable facility for their future development; and the really flourishing condition which our ordinary revenue has lately assumed will justify a sanguine

belief that the necessary demands of our extensive and yet to be fully developed gold-fields may, in future, be promptly and liberally met, without neglecting the just claims of the older districts.

8. The road necessary to complete the track between the Ports of Nelson and Cobden has been cut through, although at a cost considerably greater than was estimated last Session, the distance which then remained to be opened has been found to be about 80 instead of 66 miles as had previously been estimated, and instead of a foot-track a horse-track has been made wherever that was found practicable without great additional expense. The country through which the track has been cut was chiefly an uninterrupted black birch forest, very swampy, and the climate appears to be so unlike most other portions of the Nelson Province that the men employed could often not work two days a week on account of the almost constant rain. The Provincial Engineer reports, "the nature of the country in the Upper Grey seems to forbid the hope that we shall ever obtain a really good track except at a very great expense, but further exploration may lead to the discovery of a more favorable line than the one that has been selected."

9.—Mr. Dent who had been sent with a small party to put up some chain ladders at Timiko cliffs, and to effect some other improvements to make the West Coast line passable for foot passengers, reports that he believes the river Pororari to be safe for the entrance of small steamers, and should his opinion prove to be correct I have no doubt that the importation of provisions by that means would give practical access to a large country between the rivers Grey and Buller, known to be highly auriferous but very inaccessible by inland communication. I may here remark that the very rugged and impassable character of the country in which the gold is generally found in this province will prevent its being rapidly exhausted, and the present system of skimming over only the richest spots will undoubtedly be succeeded by a more steady and systematic method of working what is now left behind by the impatient fortune hunters. When greater facilities of access have been either discovered or created, and the cost of provisions thereby reduced, millions of acres in this province will pay for working under such improved circumstances as will justify the gold-seeker in being satisfied with only handsome wages.

10.—Mr. Blackett's full report on all the most important public works in the various other portions of the province, will render it unnecessary that I should do more than refer you to it, with the general remark that many improvements that might have been effected by the liberal sums which the Council last year voted for Public Works to be paid for in land, have not been undertaken, in consequence of the absence of the Provincial Engineer.

11.—The General Government has lately decided that the Provincial share of Customs duties collected at the Grey Port shall be equally divided between this Province and Canterbury. I trust that such a division is only a temporary arrangement, and that it will yet be possible to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the General Government that far more than half the duty paying goods imported at the Grey are consumed by the inhabitants of this province.

12. Although the revenue from our landed estate received by the Provincial Treasurer has been less than half of the amount estimated by the late Land Commissioner, and has done very little more than pay the expenses of the Land and Survey Department, the ordinary revenue has so greatly increased

as to make the total revenue of the province, for the present financial year, very much exceed the Estimates I laid before you last May. By calculating the revenue of the present month at only an average of the eleven preceding months, the total revenue for the current financial year would be £46,062 12s. 4d., but this does not include any portion of the customs revenue collected at the Grey, and I have reason to believe that the revenue from all sources during the present month will so much exceed the average of the last eleven, that the total revenue for the year, if 3-16ths of the Grey customs should be received, will be little, if any, short of £54,000; and although this amount is less than has in former years been realised by the sale of our landed estate alone, it shows our province to be in a very much more sound financial condition than it has ever appeared in before. Meeting all its ordinary expenses by its ordinary revenue, and having a large surplus to expend on public works and permanent improvements, besides expending the sum of £5,200 in the education of its rising population, and paying the first instalment towards the liquidation of a debt that was, I think unwisely, contracted when a very large revenue was being received from the sale of Crown lands.

13. The smallness of the revenue received for land during the year, may be partly attributed to a change in the members and policy of the Waste Lands Board, which has caused land to be assessed at a price that it will ultimately realise rather than at such a low figure as to insure, and, in the case of runholders, almost to compel its immediate sale. A change which naturally decreases the present, but will be likely to increase or rather prolong the future income from our landed estate. The great demand for surveys and resurveys of land that has long since been paid for, and the expensive character of the necessary survey of what yet remains in the possession of the province, forbid me to lead you to expect that anything like a large nett revenue will ever again be obtained from this source, although, by a reversal of the present system of assessment, a temporary increase, could at any time be realised.

14. In December last year, I was advised by the Agent of the Union Bank of Australia, to issue debentures on the 1st of January in the present year, to the amount authorised under the Nelson Water Works Loan Act, and to forward them to Melbourne for sale. I have not yet heard of more than £1,700 being sold in that colony, but some enquiry has been made for them in the City of Nelson, in consequence of which I have requested that £10,000 worth of the debentures should be returned here, and so confident do I feel that the sound and flourishing condition of this Province will soon be sufficiently evident to cause those debentures to be sought for, that I have ventured to send orders to Melbourne for such portions of the plant as will be first required, hoping soon to have sufficient funds in hand to enable me to send to England for the remainder; but in any case I think it best to expend what has been received, as, by commencing at the Port and coming up to the Brook-street stream, the pipes could be made sufficiently serviceable to at once repay interest of money, and be of much service to the shipping, even should the money not presently be found to complete the whole design. I have thought this course more desirable and even more prudent than paying interest on any unemployed money, until the whole should be received.

15. David Rough, Oswald Curtis, and W. C. Hodgson, Esquires, have been appointed trustees under the eleventh section of the "Waterworks Loan Act," for the investment of all sums set apart as sinking fund, the liquidation of previous loans, and the sums

authorised by that Act to be paid out of the provincial revenue for the liquidation of the loan raised under the "Nelson Debentures Act, 1858," viz., two per cent. per annum, will be handed over to those gentlemen for investment.

16. The large number of steamers and other vessels attracted to the Grey by the gold-fields, has led to a great demand for the coal of that district, and caused its quality to be more generally known and appreciated; the result of which has been that a company has been formed in Ballarat for working the coal upon an extensive scale, to which company a lease has been granted by the Waste Lands Board, particulars of which will be laid before you.

17. The Grey and the Buller coal have at length been tested at the Woolwich dockyard, and a copy of the report of the Chief Engineer in that establishment will be at once placed upon your table. There are many reasons for believing that the coal as it eventually reached the Dockyard was hardly a fair sample, certainly not equal to what could now be sent from the Grey; yet Mr. Trickett, the Chief Engineer, reports, that "the evaporative power of this coal is about the average of that of the North of England coal as supplied to the service."

18. The boring on the West side of Mount Rochfort, for the purpose of meeting the coal on the seaward side of that hill, was suddenly and without authority abandoned by the man who had been engaged in England as a borer, after a great deal of money had been spent upon it, and affording indications which Mr. Burnett considered highly favorable. As a portion of the tools were left in the bore-hole and filled in with sand, it was considered impracticable to continue the same bore, and under all the circumstances I did not consider it desirable to commence a new one.

19. The settlers of the West Coast, both north and south of the Grey river, have erected at the Grey-mouth, by voluntary subscription, a building to be used as a hospital. Although the building has been erected in the Canterbury Province, I am informed that it is the intention of the managing committee to receive patients from both provinces, and subject to that condition, I have promised to recommend that this province should contribute a fair share towards the expense of the maintenance of the establishment.

It is my intention to place on the Estimates the sum of £2,500 for the erection of a new hospital in this city. My reasons for recommending this vote were explained when I addressed the Council at the commencement of last session. I have received some very interesting, although not official, letters from the Bishop of Nelson, upon the general question of hospital management and support, and am indebted to His Lordship for some generous offers of voluntary assistance both towards building and maintenance. I entirely agree with His Lordship that such an institution should at least partly be supported and superintended by voluntary efforts, and it would afford me much pleasure to see a more general interest taken in the welfare of an institution so adapted to alleviate the distress of our suffering fellow-colonists.

20. In consequence of the great deficiency of meat to supply the demand of our large additional population, particularly on the West Coast, I found it necessary to permit the importation of cattle from Australia, and a proclamation was issued for that purpose on the 31st day of October last. The island known as the "Rabbit Island," has been proclaimed a quarantine ground for cattle, and I hope it will be found possible to prevent the introduction of disease amongst the herds of this province.

21. The unusually wet and unfavorable weather which was experienced during the late harvest has very seriously deteriorated the value of the agricultural produce of the province, inflicting general loss upon an important portion of our population, and one which cannot fail to be felt through the whole community as a serious drawback to its otherwise flourishing condition and cheerful prospects. The roads and bridges of the province also sustained considerable damage by an unusually high flood, which occurred on the 2nd February, and the necessity for the immediate repair of some of the most important of these works has induced me to instruct the Provincial Engineer to proceed with those repairs without waiting for a vote from the Council to cover the necessary cost.

22. A bill has been prepared to give three additional members to your Council, to represent the Grey and Buller districts. You will recognise the justice of making some provision for the representation of the large population on the West Coast; but for many obvious reasons I have not recommended that the number of representatives should bear the same proportion to the electors as would be desirable if the population had been engaged in pursuits of a less migratory character. You will see that the bill has not been prepared with a view to bringing it into operation during the present session; the necessity of obtaining the Governor's assent to the measure, and the delay that must take place before the elections could be effected, would render a very long adjournment necessary to accomplish that otherwise desirable object.

23. A Bill is also laid on your table to provide for the Election of Local Boards on the Gold-fields with similar powers to those given under the Town Improvement and Country Roads Acts. There are some difficulties in framing, and will probably be

much greater ones in working, such an Act; but the circumstances connected with most Gold-fields render any approach to local self-government for the purpose of local expenditure so highly desirable that I trust you will consider the experiment worthy of serious consideration.

24.—A few days will now place the capital of this province in communication with the most important ports in this Island by means of the Electric Telegraph; and the regular information that will thus be so rapidly transmitted, will enable each of the five provinces on this Island to maintain a more intelligent and active interest in the progress and welfare of the whole.

25.—It will not be convenient to print the general estimates until a few days after the expiration of the financial year, so as to give the Treasurer and Auditor time to balance their accounts, but they shall be submitted to you without any unnecessary delay.

26.—It now only remains for me to express a hope that the Great Source of all wisdom may guide your deliberations and grant prosperity to the province, whose interests you are now called upon to watch over and represent, and that avoiding all those improvident attempts to exalt the present at the expense of the future, which have proved so fatal to the steady progress of some portions of the colony, the Executive and Legislature of this province may long continue to work harmoniously together, and be rewarded by the conviction that we have in some humble degree been enabled to promote the happiness of those whose prosperity or safety may, in any measure, depend upon the manner in which our public duties have been performed.

ALFRED SAUNDERS,
Superintendent.