




NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE,
(PROVINCE OF NELSON.)

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ALFRED GREENFIELD, Provincial Secretary.

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Superintendent Office,
Nelson, 30th October, 1867.

THE SUPERINTENDENT directs the publication of the following Reports for general information.

ALFRED GREENFIELD,
Provincial Secretary.

To the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, Nelson.

Provincial Engineer's Office,
Nelson, September 17, 1867.

SIR,—I have the honor to report, for the information of his Honor the Superintendent, that I yesterday returned to Nelson after nearly a month's absence at the West Coast. I was accompanied on my journey by the Assistant Engineer, Mr. A. D. Dobson. I left Nelson on Wednesday, 21st August.

at 2 p.m., and arrived in Westport at 4 a.m. on Saturday, 24th, by the steamer Kennedy.

I remained in Westport until Wednesday, 28th, and then left with Mr. Kynnersley for Charleston, arriving there at 2 p.m., after a journey of three hours on horseback,—distance, 22 miles.

We left Charleston next day at noon, and arrived in Brighton at 2.30 p.m., a distance of about 11 miles.

The following day (30th) we left Brighton at 11 a.m., and rode to Cobden, about 43 miles, arriving at 8.30 p.m. We remained at the Grey until the 4th September (having in the meanwhile been up the river nearly to the Twelve-mile, and also visited the Coal-mine); then returned to Westport, staying one night at Brighton, and one at Charleston, reaching Westport on Friday, the 6th September.

On Monday, 9th September, we left Westport for Nelson, overland by the Buller valley, arriving here on Monday, September 16, having stayed one day at the Lyell for the purpose of selecting a site for a

bridge over the Buller, and making other observations.

I shall now proceed to make a few remarks on the various works which have been executed on the West Coast during the last year and a-half.

MAIN ROAD BETWEEN WESTPORT AND COBDEN.

This stands first in importance, and may be divided into sections, for clearness of illustration, viz. :—

Westport to Charleston—22 miles.

Made up as follows:—7 miles of beach to Cape Foulwind; about 3 miles over the Cape, cut through bush, 1 chain wide, laid with brush facines, and covered with sand about 14 feet wide, suitable for dray traffic; then another short beach, and a short cutting through a narrow neck of scrub, followed by a 10-mile beach of hard sand, and terminating with a piece of road through bush, with side and other cuttings, and a bridge over the Nile, with cutting up the hill beyond into the town. All this work is well carried out, and Cobb's coach runs daily from each place, at such times as suit the tides, and so as to make the beaches available.

There are two landing-places here, one in Constant Bay, immediately in front of the town, which is laid out on ground rising from the Bay, and one a little to the North, not far from the river mouth. Constant Bay is composed of a small circular sandy beach, to which access is gained by a channel between high shelving rocks, about 60 feet wide, and several chains in length, making the entrance at any time a most critical proceeding, and when there is any sea on, highly dangerous. The other landing is merely a piece of the open beach, marked off by signal staffs which denote the best course to vessels entering.

The main streets of Charleston are formed and metalled, and a good metalled road, about a mile long, has been made from the town towards the diggings, suitable for dray traffic. A tramway is now in course of construction by Mr. Nees from the second described landing-place to the diggings.

Charleston to Brighton—11 miles.

Consisting of a good horse road, metalled, over the Pakihi, which is made up of ground partly level, partly undulating and hilly, and much of which is covered with bush and scrub. The road crosses three rivers, of considerable size, one of which is bridged; it emerges on the beach about 1½ or 2 miles north of Brighton, the latter portions being made through scrub and very wet ground, which has been well and solidly paved with stone.

A tramway extends from Brighton northwards to St. Kilda, a small township situated under the terrace, on which are situated the diggings, about 1½ miles long, on which a passenger van runs daily.

The town of Brighton stands on a level piece of sandy ground, very little raised above high water level, and close to high water mark.

The Fox river runs into the sea close by, to the southward, and between the river and Woodpecker Bay, which is about three quarters of a mile off, lies a rocky promontory and a sandy beach, covered with many rocks, some of which have lately become deprived by storms of a former deep covering of sand, thus almost entirely stopping dray traffic between the Bay and Brighton, as the drays cannot now pass between the rocks. The necessity for obviating this inconvenience was so apparent, that I called for tenders for forming a dray road over the worst part of the rocky shore, and accepted one for £11 per chain, for thirteen chains, authorising also the formation of a narrow foot track, by which persons may travel independently of the beach.

Brighton to Razor-back.—16½ miles.

This is an inland road, made to avoid the rocky bluffs and precipices on the coast-line, and lies entirely through bush. The first three and a half miles are along the southern bank of the Fox river, partly on flat land and partly in rocky side-cutting. The next one and a half mile is up a branch of that river, in the river bed, the stream being crossed no less than seventeen times.

When the river is low, this is not very objectionable; but in freshes it is a complete bar to all traffic, and very dangerous to travellers, who might attempt to continue their journey while the flood lasted.

Thirteen of these crossings might be saved at an expense—say of £350 to £400; but in answer to all my enquiries on the subject, it appears next to impossible to obtain a road at any practicable level which shall avoid all the fords, without going to a very great expense indeed.

Nearly the whole of the remainder of the road is either gravelled or metalled; in the latter case with broken rock, and in some parts corduroyed where metal was not easily obtainable. The metalling here must have been very expensive.

The bush has been felled and cleared, generally twenty-two feet wide; the gradients have been well preserved, and the whole work very creditably carried out. The scenery around is very romantic, being bounded by very high limestone cliffs steeply escarped, and crowned and clothed with bush.

Razor-back to Cobden—27 miles.

The first ten miles of this is along a good hard beach, that is, at low water; at high water the travelling is more difficult. Then follows the Seventeen-mile bluff, over which a track has been cut about a mile and a half long, nearly all in loose stone and rock; next, the Ten-mile creek and bluffs, over which a track, about two and a half miles long, has been cut involving some of the heaviest work in side and rock cutting yet done on the West Coast roads, over a very rough and difficult piece of country with a very strong excellent bridge over the creek, on the model of the Coal Creek bridge at Cobden. Also the Nine-mile bluff with a road about one and a half miles, and Point Elizabeth over which an excellent horse road, all metalled, has been made, about two miles. The beaches between these bluffs gradually become worse for travelling over, as we proceed south, that between Point Elizabeth and Cobden being very heavy and toilsome.

FROM COBDEN UP THE GREY

The old walking track has been altered, where necessary, and converted into a good useful horse track, at a low level, well metalled, nearly all the way to the coal-mine, about seven miles beyond which to the Arnold ferry, it is also practicable for horses, but a few places here and there will need metalling, should there be much traffic.

The track between Westport and Cobden is now in such a state for traffic that the distance, about 70 miles, may be performed with a change of horses in about 14 hours.

WESTPORT.

I will now revert to Westport, and make some additional remarks on that and the other townships and districts.

From the landing-place on the south bank of the Buller opposite Westport, a good horse road has been made and metalled to Addison's Flat, otherwise called Waites' Pakihi, or Skibbereen, four miles of which are a portion of the old track up the Buller improved by ditching and metalling; the remaining portion, also about four miles, follows the foot of the

ranges to the township or townships, which are rapidly extending southwards. The ground about here is so soft and boggy, and the necessity for an extension of the road so obvious, that I quite agreed with Mr. Kynnersley's proposal to still further extend it for about 30 chains, at a cost probably of about £125; this will reach nearly the furthest portion of the township—which is almost surrounded with diggings, mostly sinking 20 to 30 feet deep, to the black sand in which the gold is deposited—the amount of labor here bestowed on tail-races, dams, and well slabbed shafts, as well as wooden tramways for the conveyance of timber, attest the confidence of the miners as to the result of their enterprise—in every probability this will be an extensive and permanent diggings, from the character and area of the ground all supposed to be auriferous.

My attention was drawn to the fact that the new Court-house now in course of erection at Westport, would not be suited to the requirements of a District Court, and that new offices would be required when the Court was established. On due consideration I decided that such additions could be much more economically and conveniently made now than afterwards, and therefore drew up a specification of the extra rooms, &c., required, and procured a tender from the present contractor, for the work, this amounted to £378, which, however, I considered too much, and the amount was ultimately reduced to £360, the additions being carried forward simultaneously with the original buildings.

A request was made by the Custom-house authorities, that an examination-shed be erected in close proximity to the new wharf Westport. The consideration of this, however, I deferred till my return in order that it might be sanctioned or otherwise by His Honor the Superintendent. Probable cost £150 to £200. The increase of trade at Westport would point to the necessity of a larger Custom House being erected. Mr. Kynnersley, has I believe written to the Superintendent on the subject; and, I believe the building will be required very shortly, should the place progress as it now appears to be doing. The cost of this will probably be about £400.

It will, I think, also be necessary to consider the question of Gaol accommodation at Westport—the present Lock-up with only two cells, has sometimes as many as 17 prisoners—and the new Lock-up with four cells, now being built, will not admit of any separation of prisoners, male from female, or criminal from debtors.

It is true that we may relieve this to a certain extent by sending a portion of the prisoners to Nelson Gaol—which may serve the purpose for a time—but I feel almost sure that further outlay will be required in connection with this subject before long—say to the extent of £500.

Wharf.

A further increase of shipping will also certainly demand a further extension of wharf accommodation before long. This, however, I think, may be accomplished gradually, and at a comparatively moderate cost by building detached jetties, instead of a continuous structure. As the present wharf approaches completion, I should advise that tenders be called for its occupation, as is now done with the Nelson wharf.

Many of the streets in Westport, partly in the township, and partly in the reserve, have been for a portion of their length well formed, gravelled, and also provided with footpaths; the former at the expense of the Government, the latter at the expense of the inhabitants—Some of this work is yet in hand, and from the nature of the ground is very

costly—the contracts, will, however, very shortly be completed.

Hospital Accommodation.

There is no doubt that this will shortly have to be provided for, on an increased scale; the present building (old Government store) not being adapted for the purpose. The question of the maintenance of the road between Westport and Cobden was brought under my notice, with a proposal that the road should be let out to contractors in lengths to be kept in a good and efficient state.

On the ground, however, that the road, being new and generally well made, would stand a considerable amount of traffic without any repairs worth speaking of, and that we should require an overseer to look after the contractors and keep them to their duty, and also, that we should be incurring a large and possibly useless expenditure by entering into these contracts—I decided that the wisest course would be to attend to the repairs as they were needed with our present staff—and, therefore, directed that the sub-overseer now stationed at Brighton, should overlook the whole of the road from Charleston to Razor-Back; employing hands only when required, and that the overseer of works should attend to all the roads in the vicinity of the Grey in the same way—as well as exercise the general supervision of the whole.

CHARLESTON.

A deputation waited on Mr. Kynnersley here, requesting that he would immediately commence the construction of a good packing-track to Waite's Pakihi, some eight or ten miles, in order that the inhabitants might partake of the benefit of supplying these diggings as well as Westport. The deputation was assured by Mr. Kynnersley and by myself, that the making of this road was totally out of the question, and that it was not needed in any way.

The Hospital at Charleston is just about finished, and will soon be ready for the reception of patients.

BRIGHTON.

A deputation waited on Mr. Kynnersley at this place also, urging several subjects on his notice, and requesting that sundry works be undertaken at once. Amongst these was a dray road to Woodpecker Bay (already described); a road to some new diggings, near Jacob's Ladder; the conversion of the horse road to Charleston into a dray road; and the construction of a proper horse road up the branch of Fox's river, instead of the river-bed road now in use (described before). To the first only of these demands was an assent given, and the work was put in hand forthwith.

Brighton Hospital is now completed, and only requires the internal fittings to make it serviceable.

COBDEN AND THE GREY.

I instructed Mr. Dent, the overseer of works to proceed at once to the Abaura for the purpose of marking out a line for the road through the Fifteen-mile beach, and, to take with him a foreman who should superintend the execution of the work which should be let out in contracts of moderate length.

I also authorised him to repair effectually the horse-track up the Grey between the Coal-mine and Arnold Ferry.

I find it difficult to give an estimate of the cost of the work through the Fifteen-mile bush. The felling and clearing may probably cost £600, while the cost of gravelling will depend on the facilities which exist for obtaining the necessary material, and of which I have at present no knowledge. The repairs on the road above the Coal-mine may probably cost about £50.

I shall now summarise those items and their cost, the execution of which I thought necessary, as well as those which may probably be required before long.

*Extensions of Horse Road to Addison's Flat	£125
*Additions to New Court-house, Westport	360
Examination Shed, Wharf, Westport say	200
New Custom-house say	409
Gaol, &c. say	500
*Salary to Sub-Overseer, Maintenance of Roads, till end of financial year say	140
*Probable amount of Repairs ... say	300
*Dray Road to Woodpecker Bay, Repairs to Road up Grey... .. say	50
Abaura Road say	600
ditto metalling say	
Hospital at Westport say	1000

ROAD UP THE BULLER.

This is now open for horses from Nelson as far as the Lyell, 112 miles, between which, and the Inangahau, there still remain about 2 miles of stony side-cutting to complete, at the Lyell end.

Below the Inangahau there is a portion, say 2 miles, of entirely new road to make, mostly side-cutting and some of it solid rock, in order to avoid climbing over the Ohika Hill, Hawkscrag Hill, and Blackwater Hill. I determined on this course after a careful examination of the ground, as producing a road comparatively level and more satisfactory in every way than by the old line, which of itself would require a large expenditure to improve it, and even then, from its steepness and great elevation, be a source of perpetual dissatisfaction, besides being almost useless for packing.

Below this point, Ohika, the old road requires improving in many ways to make it useful as a horse-track, chiefly in clearing it of scrub and improving the cuttings, as well as gravelling all the softer parts. I roughly estimate that it will require the expenditure of an additional £2000 to complete this track, and would strongly urge the completion of it without delay.

The connection between Nelson and Westport will even then be incomplete, without some means being provided for crossing the Buller above the Lyell. The establishment even of a punt for horses, &c., would be most difficult owing to the nature of the river and its banks—the river being so swift and the banks being so rocky and inaccessible. One of the greatest difficulties would be to secure the punt safely in heavy freshes, there being so little room at the sides of the river. From the measurements and observations I took in connection with the site for the proposed bridge, I should not expect that a bridge could be erected and roads made to it for less than £3000 or £4000, and at the best it would be a difficult undertaking.

I propose to prepare a plan and estimate of a structure suited to the locality, and to submit it to his Honor for consideration.

A considerable portion of the North Buller road above the Maruia, particularly about the Owen river, is in a very muddy state, and at one or two places is rather dangerous; but I left these to be dealt with at a future time, as the traffic is not actually impeded

* These sums, (£1068), will certainly be required the rest are open for consideration. The new Court-house, Westport, will require fittings, not included in contract, probably £100.

thereby, and more important works demand our first attention.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

JOHN BLACKETT,

Provincial Engineer.

To the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, Nelson.

SIR—In forwarding an estimate of the probable additional revenue and requisite expenditure on the South-west gold-fields, for the financial year ending March 31, 1868, I have again the pleasure to report a considerable increase in the population and prosperity of the district.

The very large outlay during the last six months on roads and other public works on these gold-fields, although it has considerably exceeded the gold-fields revenue, has not been rashly undertaken without first duly considering the cost and the probable reproductive nature of each work, but has been incurred advisedly and wholly expended either upon buildings absolutely necessary for the carrying on of the Government, such as gaols, court-houses, and police stations, or upon necessary harbour works, or upon opening and maintaining in repair the main trunk lines of communication along the coast and along the course of the main valleys of the Grey and Buller.

No branch roads to new diggings or any other roads have been made except such as were clearly of a reproductive nature, requisite for the conveyance of provisions to the miners, or to connect and open up communication between important districts. And that the whole expenditure has been of a reproductive nature, is shown by the fact that it has been the means of raising this province to that proper position which it should always continue to maintain, namely, the chief gold-producing province in New Zealand; the export of gold from Nelson for the quarter ending September 30th, having exceeded that of either Canterbury or Otago.

The roads upon which the money has been principally expended are—1. Three miles of dray-road over Cape Foulwind through good flat bush land, and one mile near Charleston. By means of these four miles of road, connecting the beaches, the whole road, of twenty miles in length, between Westport and Charleston has been made available for the drays and daily coaches, and a large tract of excellent land has been opened for settlement.

South of Charleston, and north of Brighton, the coast road has only been made wide enough for drays for a short distance from the town, for the convenience of the neighbouring diggings, and the intermediate hilly country is traversed by a good bridle track, which is now in an excellent state of repair, as is also that portion of the road between Brighton and Cobden, upon which a very large outlay was found necessary in the construction of the road and blasting of the rocks over the extremely rugged rocky bluffs in the neighbourhood of the Ten-mile creek.

About £3,000 has been expended on the bridle-track from Westport to Skibbereen, distant eight miles, the whole of which it was necessary to form, and metal, and drain with deep ditches. This road follows for four miles the Buller valley road, and then diverges from it to the southward for four miles along the foot of the hills, and that it is much required is shown by the fact that from forty to fifty loaded pack-horses go out upon it every morning to supply the population of about 3,000 men who are

working in the neighbourhood of Addison's Flat. As these workings extend to the southward, it will probably be thought advisable, when the state of the Treasury admits of it, to continue this road along the foot of the hills, to connect it with the Charleston district.

A short piece of dray-road has been made to keep open the communication between Brighton and the port of Woodpecker Bay, the natural road which formerly existed along the beach having been washed away by the sea.

A considerable sum has been expended on the maintenance of the Grey valley road, and on just such rough tracks up some of the more important tributaries of that river as appeared necessary to assist in the development of the resources of that most important district, which demands more attention and encouragement than we have latterly been enabled to devote to it.

The bridle road through the bush up the Ahaura valley has all been contracted for, and will be completed by December 31st, at a cost of about £2,000; and will probably produce most important results, by connecting the West Coast with the Wai-au-ua, affording a ready market for the stock of the Amuri district, enhancing the value of the grass lands of the Upper Grey, lessening the price of meat on the diggings, and rendering an extremely likely-looking country accessible to the miners.

Of the expenditure on the roads in the Buller valley, I am unable to make any report, as the accounts do not pass through our books; and I presume that the Provincial Engineer will give the requisite information concerning them, as well as his opinion upon the laying out and construction of all the roads on the Coast which he has inspected during his recent tour, and which have been made since his last previous visit.

I have had the continuation of the coast road to the northward, between the Mokihinui and Little Wanganui, laid out and blazed, ready to be commenced whenever circumstances will permit; and I have also had the Mokihinui Valley thoroughly explored, to ascertain the best means of supplying provisions to the large tract of auriferous country towards the upper part of that river, in case of the discovery of any large extent of payable ground. The reports which I have received are not such as to encourage us to attempt any track through the mountainous gorgy country which intervenes between the coast and the basin of the Upper Mokihinui, as it appears that, like the Upper Karamea, it could be more easily supplied from the eastern side of the range. Several parties having lately succeeded in taking up provisions in boats, this district will, no doubt, be thoroughly prospected.

The discovery has been reported of a practicable track between Brighton and the Little Grey, but as it appears that it crosses the Paparoa range at an elevation of 5,000 feet, I have no hope of any practical benefit being derived from it, although I have thought it worth while to send a road overseer to inspect and report upon it.

I am aware that there cannot, for some considerable time, be any funds available for roads and public works on the gold-fields, but I may mention a few of the works most requisite in the order of their relative importance:—

1. Protection to the bank of the River Buller, in front of the town of Westport. This should be commenced as soon as possible, as a matter of economy, before any more of it is washed away.
2. Continuation of the coast road to the northward, between Mokihinui and Wanganui.
3. Bridge over Buller near Lyell, and completion of Buller Valley road.
4. Bridle track on the coast road, up Fox's River, to avoid crossing the river.
5. Bridle track, Skibbereen to Charleston.
6. Continuation of road on north bank of Grey, from Twelve-Mile to Moonlight.

With regard to buildings, all those requisite have been erected, with the exception of a new Custom-house at Westport. A hospital is also much required at Westport, but I hope that a considerable sum may be raised by public contributions towards its erection. The comparatively isolated position of Charleston and Brighton has unfortunately necessitated the erection of separate gaols, hospitals, and other buildings at each place.

If the Mokihinui progresses, a court-house, police-station, lock-up, post-office, and custom-house, will be required there; but there is no necessity at present for anything more than the present police-tents and a lock-up, which will shortly be erected.

I am happy to say that the population have been very orderly, and that, owing chiefly to the efficient state of the police force, with the exception of one death by violence in the neighbourhood of the Buller, and a few petty thefts and breaches of the peace, there has been very little crime committed on the gold-fields.

I estimate the population as follows:—

Buller district	5,000
Grey	4,000
Brighton	2,800
Charleston	3,200
Mokihinui	1,500
Westport	1,500
	18,000

The revenue for the next six months may be thus estimated:—

Warden's Court Revenue	£ 10,000
Gold Export Duty	18,000
Provincial Share of Import Duties—	
Westport, Brighton, and Greymouth	12,000
Sale of Land on Gold-fields	2,000
	£42,000

Other returns are also appended, showing the expenditure during the six months ending September 30th, and the probable amount required in the several departments under my control for the ensuing half-year.

I have, &c.,

T. A. SNEYD KYNNESELY,
Commissioner.

Commissioner's Office, Westport,
October 23, 1867.