



THE
NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE,
(PROVINCE OF NELSON.)

Published by Authority.

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ALFRED GREENFIELD, Provincial Secretary.

VOL. XX.

NELSON, TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1871.

No. 11.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1871.

THE Twenty-first Session of the Provincial Council of Nelson was opened this day at One o'clock, when the following Address of his Honor the Superintendent was delivered:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL—

1. The Revenue for the Financial Year just ended although not quite equal to that of the preceding twelve months, approaches it so nearly as to show that the continued depression, which has prevailed in almost every branch of industry in the Colony, has not seriously affected the Finances of this Province—the actual Receipts during the year 1870-71 having amounted to £80,000, against £82,000 in 1869-70, notwithstanding that the Census just completed shows that the population of the South-West Goldfields has diminished to a material extent while that of the other parts of the Province has increased only in a very small degree.

2. The alteration of the law effected in the last

Session of the General Assembly by “The Payment to Provinces Act,” which substitutes a fixed capita- tion allowance for the moiety of the Consolidated Revenue hitherto allocated to the Provinces, both simplifies accounts between the Colonial and Provin- cial Governments, and enables the latter to estimate with accuracy the amount of a leading item of their revenues, while the annual grant provided by the same measure for expenditure by Road Boards releases a portion of the Provincial Funds, which would otherwise have necessarily been devoted to the works now executed under the direction of those bodies.

3. The amendments in “The Waste Lands Act, 1863,” which you adopted by resolution in your last Session, were passed into law by the General Assembly without alteration. Those you wished to see introduced into “The Leasing Act, 1867,” passed without material alteration through the House of Representatives, but in the Legislative Council the important clauses entitling the lessee to a Crown Grant after due payment of rent only for a term of years, were struck out. I propose, however, to introduce a measure containing the same provisions at the meeting of the new Parliament, and I think,

looking to the tone of public opinion in reference to the disposal of the Crown Lands, it is not improbable that it will receive the assent of both Houses of the Legislature.

4. A material alteration was also made by the Legislative Council in "The Nelson College Bill," by conferring the appointment of Governors upon the Visitor of the College, instead of upon the Provincial Councils of Nelson and Marlborough, as proposed in your resolution of the 1st of June last.

5. In accordance with your desire, I have caused enquiry to be made into the proposal of some of the leading inhabitants of the southern part of the Grey Valley to annex that portion of the County of Westland to this Province; and the report of the gentleman to whom the enquiry was entrusted will be placed in your hands.

In compliance with the prayer of a numerous signed petition, presented to the House of Representatives, the Colonial Government introduced a Bill to effect the annexation of the country lying between the Grey and the Teremakau to the Province of Nelson. At a late period in the Session, however, the Government thought it expedient to withdraw the Bill, with the understanding that a Commission would be appointed during the recess to enquire fully into the subject, and to report thereupon for the information of Parliament at its next meeting.

In the meantime, it will be desirable that you should express your opinion upon the question, for the guidance of the Legislature, as it appears to me that the junction of two heretofore separate communities, under one Government, can only be expedient when sanctioned by the approval of each, or by that of their elected representatives.

6. Amongst the most important measures passed during the last Session of Parliament, was "The Immigration and Public Works Act." In reference to the question of Immigration, I have expressed to the Colonial Government, in correspondence which will be laid before you, my opinion that it is not desirable to encourage the introduction of immigrants to this Province, otherwise than in connection with Public Works of a nature not only to give employment to immigrants on their arrival, but also to render land, hitherto practically inaccessible, available for their occupation.

7. "The Railways Act" empowers the Governor to contract, on the terms already provided by "The Nelson and Cobden Railway Acts," for the construction of a Railway from Nelson to Cobden and Westport, a work which I consider to be essential to open up for occupation by gold miners and by permanent settlers a large portion of this Province, which at present, in the absence of means of access and communication, is practically valueless, and must for many years remain comparatively unoccupied and unproductive.

You are aware that for a long time past, negotiations have been entered into by Mr. Morrison, the Agent for the Province in London, for the execution of this important work, and that those negotiations have hitherto been unsuccessful.

8. Resolutions will be submitted for your con-

sideration, recommending to the Colonial Government the construction of a small portion of each end of the proposed line—namely, between Nelson and Foxhill at the Northern, and between Cobden and the Brunner Coal-mine at the Southern extremity.

Anticipating your concurrence in these resolutions, I have obtained the promise of the Colonial Government, should they consider further surveys to be needed for the information of the Legislature, to cause them to be executed without delay.

9. Your assent will also be asked to the preparation of a Bill, to be laid before the General Assembly, authorising me to raise a loan of £200,000 for the extension of Waterworks, and the construction of Gasworks in the City of Nelson, the Colonial Government having undertaken to recommend a measure to the favorable consideration of the Legislature, on condition that the principal interest of the loan shall be secured upon the raised for the supply of Water and Gas, and upon the ordinary rates levied by the Board of Waterworks and not upon the Provincial Revenue.

10. With a view to obtain, for the benefit of the Province, a portion of the sum of £300,000 authorised by the Legislation of last Session of the General Assembly, to be raised for the supply of Water upon the Gold Fields, I instructed the District Engineer to report upon the manner in which such funds as may be allotted to Nelson could be most advantageously expended.

Resolutions founded upon Mr. Dobson's Report will be brought before you, in order that you may make such recommendations to his Excellency the Governor as may appear to you to be desirable.

11. The District Engineer has prepared for your information a Report, showing the various blocks of land suitable for agricultural settlement, which can most readily be made available in the Valley of the Buller and Grey, and their tributaries. The largest in area and one of the most desirable on other grounds to bring into occupation, is situated in the Valley of the Inangahua, and I recommend for your enquiry and decision whether it is expedient to refer his Excellency the Governor to withdraw this or other of the Blocks referred to by Mr. Dobson from the operation of "The Goldfields Act," in order that the land may be divided into sections, and dealt with under the provisions of "The Waste Lands Act, 1863," and of "The Leasing Act, 1867."

12. During the recess I have visited, in company with the Provincial Treasurer and the Goldfields Representative, the chief centres of population upon the South-west Goldfields, and I trust that the result of that visit has been not only the acquisition of valuable information in reference to the administration of the affairs of that energetic and prosperous part of our community, but also the removal of many injurious misapprehension which existed as to the treatment which the Goldfields have received from the Provincial Council and Government.

13. I now declare this Council open for the dispatch of business.

OSWALD CURTIS,
Superintendent.