

(No. 44.)



1879.

T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

M A I N L I N E R A I L W A Y :

E N G I N E E R - I N - C H I E F ' S R E P O R T , W I T H C O R R E S P O N D E N C E .

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, and ordered by the House to be printed, September 9, 1879.



MINUTE PAPER FOR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 24th April, 1879.

SUBMITTED,

THAT under and by virtue of the power conferred by Section 5 of "The Main Line of Railway Amendment Act," 34 Vict. No. 13, Mr. James Fincham, Engineer-in-Chief for Tasmania, be appointed to examine and report whether the works of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway are in good and efficient repair and working condition.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

THE Governor in Council approves.

E. C. NOWELL.
24. 4. '79.

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 24th April, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to intimate to you that His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint you an Officer under Clause 5 of "The Main Line Railway Amendment Act," 34 Vict. No. 13, to report whether the works of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway are in good and efficient repair and working condition; and whether the recommendations contained in a Report furnished the Government by W. H. Greene, Esq., C.E., dated the 19th of December, 1878, have been duly carried out.

I have given Mr. C. H. Grant, the Company's Manager, due notice of your appointment, and I desire that you will proceed at your earliest convenience to examine into the state of repair of the permanent way, rolling stock, and works of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

JAMES FINCHAM, *Esq., C.E., Engineer-in-Chief
for Tasmania, Hobart Town.*

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 24th April, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acquaint you that the Government have, in accordance with the provisions of the 5th Section of "The Main Line Railway Amendment Act," 34 Vict. No. 13, appointed James Fincham, Esq., C.E., Engineer-in-Chief for Tasmania, an Officer to report whether the works of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway are in good and efficient repair and working condition; and whether the recommendations contained in a Report furnished the Government by W. H. Greene, Esq., C.E., dated the 19th of December last, have been duly carried out.

I presume that you will afford the Engineer-in-Chief every facility for carrying his instructions into effect.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., C.E., General Manager, Tasmanian
Main Line Railway, Hobart Town.*

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,
General Manager's Office, Hobart Town, 25th April, 1879.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, in which you inform me that—in accordance with the provisions of the 5th Section of the Main Line of Railway Amendment Act—the Government have appointed James Fincham, Esq., the Engineer-in-Chief of Tasmania, to report whether the works of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway are in good and efficient repair and working condition, and shall be happy to give Mr. Fincham every facility he desires for inspecting the Railway.

You further state that Mr. Fincham is desired to report whether the recommendations contained in the Report of Mr. W. H. Greene have been duly carried out: in reference to which I must remind you that my reply to such Report stated fully what the Company intended to perform,—and I was pleased to learn by the last inwards Mail that the remarks I then made have received the full approval of my Directors, some of whom are men of the highest practical knowledge and of very lengthened experience in railway matters on the largest and most important railways in the world.

I have, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

Hon. C. O'REILLY, M.H.A., Minister of Lands and Works.

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 19th June, 1879.

SIR,

IN accordance with your instructions under date of 24th April last I have the honor to report that I have examined the works of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway in order to ascertain their present state of repair and working condition, and also whether certain recommendations contained in a Report furnished to the Government by W. H. Greene, Esq., C.E., dated the 19th day of December, 1878, had been duly carried out; and now beg herewith to submit my Report on the same.

I have, &c.

JAMES FINCHAM.

The Hon. C. O'REILLY, Minister of Lands and Works.

REPORT on present state of Repair and Working Condition of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway.

FENCES.

WITH the exception of a few miles on northern portions of the Railway, the wire fences are in a neglected and more or less insecure state; this is especially the case between Brighton and Flat Top Tunnel, where at many points sheep and cattle would find no difficulty in getting through them, and the small posts have been burnt off at the bottom in some places, while at others,—as at Mr. Lord's siding, bridge near Tea Tree, and elsewhere,—the fences are quite open.

Cut down all trees that in falling would endanger traffic.

EARTHWORKS.

These are generally standing well, but the following repairs should have immediate attention; viz.—

To complete slope for support of embankment at ballast pit near New Town.

To restore slope of embankment on Bridgewater Causeway where same is washed away, and replace the stone pitching for protection of foot of bank.

To remove earth adjoining old slip in cutting near Coal Mine Creek, it appearing likely to come down across the Railway before long.

To repair embankment where flood-water strikes same near 66m. 55c.

To restore slopes of bank washed away by flood waters from Currajong Creek, near 68m. 46c., protect slopes and stop the excessive scour here, which has cut through a very hard gravel, to a depth of 3 feet, immediately under bank of Railway.

To make up slopes of embankment where wasted by floods at 77½ miles.

To make up slopes of embankments on either side of Macquarie Bridge, and especially on inside of curve north of bridge where bank is scooped out by floods.

To restore slopes of large bank at 109¾m., and protect same by soiling.

To stop undercutting of bank on Boyes' Incline, caused by deep drain under foot of same.

To restore embankment at the south end of Clarendon Viaduct, where same is destroyed by flood, and permanently protect it by sodding or pitching. (This is a place that should be closely watched.)

To make up many of the banks, especially on the sharp curves between Lower and Upper Jerusalem, where the ballast cannot obtain a proper support.

CULVERTS.

The culverts as a whole are in fair repair now, and the timber coverings seem yet sound; but the large culvert over Bilton's Creek, and a 5-ft. culvert near 35m., are giving way under weight of bank, and require ends to be rebuilt.

BRIDGES AND VIADUCTS.

These, with exceptions below, have been maintained in fair repair, but most of the stonework has been very much shaken and cracked.

Risdon Viaduct.—Northern end span is out of repair, and main beams have been forced out of shape and away from their supports.

Bridgewater Viaduct.—Several split piles and capsills require to be secured by strong iron slips, and the south abutment is still slightly on the move. I tested some of the piles and find them sound.

Bridge at Brain's Creek.—Channel required to be cut for watercourse which is working under centre pier.

Cattle Bridge, near 64½ miles, is giving way in arch and spandrels, and requires immediate attention.

Clarendon Viaduct.—Requires the incline of grade on top at northern end to be eased off so as to do away with the plunge by which a train now comes on to it.

PRIVATE CROSSINGS.

There are sixteen crossings south of the Flat Top Tunnel that are used, and where the necessary guard and check rails are wanting.

Gates.—Many are out of repair and are unprovided with fastenings; viz.—near 2m. 68c., 3m., 6m. 50c., 6m. 70c., 15m. 60c., 17m. 70c., 20m. 10c., 24m. 10c., 26m. 8c., and at other places; and none in use are provided with any means of locking as is usual and necessary.

PUBLIC CROSSINGS.

The gates at North Bridgewater require painting that they may be seen more distinctly.

There are three crossings north of Brighton Station under charge of one gatekeeper, and they are so far apart as to make it impossible for all to be properly attended to. These gates require repairing and painting.

No resident gatekeeper is in charge of the public crossing near Nineteen Mile Point.

PERMANENT WAY.

Ballast.—Much of the inferior material has been taken out and ballast of better quality substituted. Owing to settlement more is still required in places, and should be at once put on several sharp curves between Jericho and Antill Ponds; but, generally, I consider there is a fair quantity now on the railway. The top ballast, however, between Brighton and Antill Ponds is far too coarse.

Sleepers.—These are decaying rapidly in some portions of the Line, and principally where sand ballast occurs; but I observed that new sleepers of good quality and large size were being distributed as required.

Rails.—These bear strong evidence of the severe wear and strain they undergo in the daily working of the line, and especially on the portion south of Antill Ponds. Great numbers are badly crippled, or more or less sprung from their fastenings on the curves, and on some curves are often bent in the stem or upright portion of the rail.

There are upwards of 1700 in number (or about 250 tons) of badly damaged rails, of which quantity some 1540 are between Antill Ponds and Hobart Town. These are in a deplorable condition, being crushed, split, or even wanting half their top for two and three feet of their length. As the rails in stock and those taken up lately from the Launceston and Western Railway are just about enough in quantity to effect their renewal, it should be done forthwith.

Of the remaining rails there is a large quantity that have nearly reached their limit of wear, or are on curves, and have had so much of their top ground away on both sides (having been turned) as to seriously

weaken them. The estimate made by Mr. Greene of a further quantity of 350 tons to be provided to renew such rails is, in my opinion, a very moderate estimate.

Joint Fastenings.—There are fifty (50) of these defective, of which number thirty-six (36) are between the Tea Tree and Hobart Town. In six cases no bolts at all were on one side of the joint.

STATIONS.

Platforms.—Ramps are required to platforms at O'Brien's Bridge, Campania, Jerusalem, Oatlands, and Antill Ponds.

Proper landing places for passengers are required at Tea Tree siding, Lower Jerusalem, and Clarendon, with provision for lighting same.

An additional platform is required at stations where trains pass each other, in order to obviate the risk now incurred by passengers from their having to pass between trains in leaving or entering same.

Provision is required to prevent passengers at night falling from wall at back of platform at Antill Ponds some three or four feet into the road.

Yards.—With exception of Lord's siding all the leading points are kept locked; but the security of so locking them is done away with by the facility with which any maliciously disposed person could cause mischief by simply driving out a small split pin. At siding referred to no lock was provided.

The Scotch blocks are kept in use at some stations, and properly locked, and at others they are useless; while at some they are omitted altogether: they are necessary for proper security.

A few crossings and stock rails of points require renewal.

Buildings generally are in good order. Only some of the stations are provided with clocks that can be readily seen, and all intermediate stations require provision for lighting as just made at Risdon Road.

SIGNALS.

At Stations.—The only signals provided are those in connection with the Launceston and Western Railway, one at Bridgewater, and one at Hobart Town; both of which latter are unused.

Such sufficient signals as would be required by the Board of Trade ought to be provided and used, as their absence entails very unnecessary risk, considering the speed of the fast trains, and the daily occurrence at several of the stations of shunting one train on the main line when another is due.

At Bridgewater.—I consider it imperative that proper signals should be at once fixed to protect trains from danger in connection with the Swing Bridge, which is almost directly at foot of a long, steep incline that is so tortuous as not to allow of any driver seeing the bridge till he is almost upon it. The present system of passing hand signals from one gatekeeper to another is unsatisfactory.

Either the Electric Block Signal suggested by Mr. Greene should be adopted, or a Semaphore Distant Signal for up trains worked directly with the opening of the bridge, with the wire continued back to a Semaphore Repeater Signal to be erected at the bridge, which would show the bridge-keeper the state of distant signal and also serve as semaphore for down trains.

ROLLING STOCK.

With the exception of minor repairs, I consider the passenger stock to be in as fair a condition as could be expected from the use of such cheaply constructed vehicles with a long rigid wheel base on sharp curves.

Of the waggon stock that I have examined, whenever possible during my inspection, I consider those marked "L" and "O" to be most in need of attention; but the repairs required generally are not of any special character, and would consist in turning up the unevenly worn wheels and renewal of those worn out.

Some of the engine wheels require turning or renewal, and some two or three of the engines are the worse for the rough work done by them during construction, but those needing present repair are now being attended to.

The new engines (Nos. 12, 13, and 14) do not seem to be used often, but from what I have seen of their performance I think they knock the permanent way about too much to make their use advisable until some alteration is made in them.

I think the present break gear with the powerful new breaks on express engines is sufficient for the lighter trains, but some arrangement is very necessary for taking up the slack chain more readily, and which now is often dragged along the ballast, striking the large stones about to the risk of throwing the lighter vehicles off the line.

For the heavier trains, made up of more than eight or ten vehicles, I am decidedly of opinion some better arrangements are necessary, as, should the light chain break on some of the dangerous inclines,

then the van and engine break combined would be quite inadequate to save the train. I see no reason why sufficient safety could not be obtained by providing for working the continuous break from both ends of train, and so that, if one half accidentally failed, the other would prevent the train getting away. The alteration could be made at small expense and the present danger avoided.

In making this report I have endeavoured to point out only such matters as I should consider it my duty to recommend to the attention of the Government were I responsible to them for the proper maintenance of the railway, and in such a report I am necessarily compelled to enter into considerable detail, and this is the more necessary under head "Permanent Way," which is of so tender a construction, that too much caution cannot well be exercised in its maintenance.

As to compliance by the Railway Company with certain Recommendations contained in a Report furnished to the Government by W. H. GREENE, Esq., C.E., and dated 19th December, 1878.

As to Works.—With the exception of ballasting, renewal of a few rails and sleepers, little has been done to carry out Mr. Greene's recommendation.

Rolling Stock.—Nine new vehicles on Cleminson's flexible wheel-base system are being now put together. The new waggon stock is of a better description, and an hydraulic press has been provided for testing the locomotive boilers; beyond this any work done has been of a nature of ordinary current repairs.

JAMES FINCHAM, *Engineer-in-Chief.*
June 19, 1879.

Lands and Works Office, 26th June, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to remind you that in December last Mr. W. H. Greene, C.E., of Victoria, an officer appointed under the provisions of Sec. 5 of 34 Vict. No. 13, reported to the Government that the rolling stock, permanent way, and works of the Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company were not in good and efficient repair and working condition, and that a copy of the Report was forwarded to you.

Mr. Fincham, the Engineer-in-Chief for Tasmania, having inspected the Company's works, permanent way, and rolling stock, reports on the 19th instant that but very little has been done to carry out Mr. Greene's recommendation, and that it is now imperatively necessary that certain repairs be effected.

I herewith forward you a copy of Mr. Fincham's Report on the present state of repair and working condition of the Railway, and have to request that you will at once remedy the defects pointed out by him.

I have also the honor to inform you that unless the work is proceeded with immediately I shall be compelled in the interests of the travelling public to request the Governor in Council to direct that the necessary repairs and works be performed at the cost of the Company.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY.

C. H. GRANT, Esq., *Manager T.M.L.R. Co.*

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,
General Manager's Office, Hobart Town, 30th June, 1879.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt at this office on the afternoon of the 28th instant of your letter dated the 26th instant, with which you forwarded copy of a report by the Engineer-in-Chief on the present state of repair and working condition of the Main Line Railway.

This report you allege to state "that it is now *imperatively necessary* that certain repairs be effected," but on a very careful perusal I utterly fail to discover the authority for such statement. It is true that Mr. Fincham quotes certain very trifling matters of earthwork, which would all be in exactly the same state as they were after the completion of construction, and before the opening of the Line, had not improvements been made as the opportunity served. No change, except for the better, having taken place in any one of the items, many of which represent purely differences of opinion, I cannot therefore suppose that attention to such is urgently needed.

Mr. Fincham also observes—"At Bridgewater I consider it *imperative* that proper signals should be at once fixed to protect trains from danger in connection with the swing bridge. The present system of passing hand signals from one gatekeeper to another is unsatisfactory."

This is purely a matter of opinion, for anyone not wedded to the extravagant system of English signals (to which the most serious objection is now being taken by all practical men) a direct line signal is the best possible safeguard.

Mr. Fincham concludes by stating that in making his Report he has pointed out only such matters as he would recommend for attention were he personally responsible for the maintenance of the Railway; but, unless comprised in the above observations, I fail to perceive any imperative necessity whatever alleged for the immediate carrying of his proposals into effect. These mostly represent simply differences of opinion, on which I will reply when the allegations have been duly enquired into; while the remainder are purely matters of ordinary maintenance, which are duly having attention, and are in no degree of an urgent character.

Before the recommendations made by Mr. Fincham can be attended to I must beg to be informed on the following points:—

1st. Assuming the safety of this Railway to be affected by the condition of the fences, what precise portions does he consider should be repaired?

2nd. At what points are there any trees that in falling would endanger the traffic?

3rd. At what mileage are the banks between Lower and Upper Jerusalem that are not wide enough to safely carry the ballast?

4th. What are the positions of the sixteen crossings in use south of the Flat Top Tunnel that are incomplete?

5th. What gates other than those mentioned are unprovided with fastenings?

6th. At what positions did he discover any really dangerous rails that require immediate removal? or were any such found?

7th. If the positions of the 50 defective joint fastenings would be too tedious to give, it is important to know where the six fastenings without bolts on one side were found, in order that the attention of the gangers may be called to their omission to at once bore the holes when changing the rails.

8th. At what stations are the Scotch blocks useless? and where are they required for proper security?

9th. Can any crossings and stock rails be mentioned as urgently requiring renewal?

10th. Which of the further recommendations made by Mr. Greene on the 19th December, 1878, are necessary for the safety of the Line, or at all urgently require attention?

Upon receipt of this information, the necessity for which I trust is apparent, I will have a careful examination made as to the matters detailed by Mr. Fincham, and will then have the honor of replying to his Report.

I have, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

The Hon. C. O'REILLY, Minister of Lands and Works.

Lands and Works Office, 3rd July, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo requesting to be furnished with detailed information as to repairs reported as being necessary to put the Tasmanian Main Line Railway in good and efficient repair and working condition.

In reply I have to inform you that the Engineer-in-Chief will at any moment point out the various defects.

I must again urge upon you the necessity for immediately commencing the work.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., C.E., General Manager,
Tasmanian Main Line Railway, Hobart Town.*

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,
General Manager's Office, Hobart Town, 4th July, 1879.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, in which you inform me that the Engineer-in-Chief will at any moment point out the various matters mentioned in his Report to you dated the 19th ultimo. Advantage has been taken of this information to communicate direct with Mr. Fincham, and on his furnishing the details of his complaints I shall have the honor to address you in reply to his Report.

I have, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

The Hon. C. O'REILLY, M.H.A., Minister of Lands and Works.

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,
General Manager's Office, Hobart Town, 4th July, 1879.*

DEAR SIR,

HAVING received from the Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works a copy of your Report to him, dated the 19th June last, and carefully perused the same, I had the honor to address him in reply asking for some details of your observations, the possession of which was really necessary before I could properly follow your Report. In reply the Honorable the Minister of Lands informs me that you will at any moment point out the various defects you have referred to; but as this would involve the loss of much of your valuable time, it would perhaps be more convenient to you to reply in writing to the questions I have asked. The information can probably be readily given from your note-book.

1st. As regards the fences. Your remarks are so general that I do not know what your opinion may be as to what parts require absolute renewal, and what a simple repair. I have given instructions that the fencing broken down by Mr. Lord in constructing his siding should be immediately made good; but I do not know which bridge near the Tea Tree you refer to, or any other places that are quite open. Could you kindly inform me the position of such?

2nd. You wish certain trees that would fall on the Line to be cut down. This has been done during the last eighteen months where we have been able to obtain the consent of the landowners; but some proprietors object, and no means short of an Act of Parliament would compel them to submit to this trespass upon and destruction of private property. The Railway legislation is deficient in this respect, and the Contract makes no mention of such; but if you can specify any that are particularly dangerous, I will again endeavour to obtain permission for their removal.

3rd. Will you oblige by stating the position of the embankment at Bridgewater Causeway which has been washed away and stone pitching lost? The inspectors cannot identify it.

4th. The banks between Upper and Lower Jerusalem have recently been widened, at very considerable expense, and we considered were now complete. Will you kindly mention the mileage of the banks that are not wide enough to carry the ballast?

5th. You counted 16 crossings *in use* which are not provided with the necessary guard and check-rails. I can only ascertain this of crossings *not in use*. If you have a note of the mileage will you kindly supply it?

6th. You mention that other gates besides those specified are without fastenings. Would you also give the position of such?

7th. You complain of the rails, but do not positively state that any are dangerous. Each inspector and almost each ganger being provided with an ample supply for renewal, I should be glad to know whether you saw any rails really dangerous, and which were not at the time in the course of being changed?

8th. You instance 50 joint-fastenings as being defective,—by which I presume that one bolt in each was missing; but you found 6 joints with no bolts on one side. Would you kindly mention the position of these? since this carelessness reflects on both inspector and ganger, and will be very severely punished.

9th. You remark that the Scotch blocks at some stations are useless, and at some are omitted altogether. Will you please let me know the grounds on which you base these remarks?

10th. Should any of the crossings and stock rails of points require immediate renewal, will you specify the position of such?

11th. Referring to Mr. Greene's Report: Do you consider that any of his recommendations that have not been attended to are of a very urgent character?

Since it appears to me that this information could be far more conveniently given from your memoranda than by walking along the Line, which would require several days, I should feel greatly obliged were it given in this manner.

I am, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

JAS. FINCHAM, *Esq., C.E., Engineer-in-Chief.*

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 7th July, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, informing me that advantage had been taken of the information conveyed to you in my letter of the 3rd instant to communicate with Mr. Fincham direct, with a view to obtaining certain details in connection with his report on the Main Line Railway.

In reply I have to intimate that Mr. Fincham, acting under instructions from the Government, is prepared to point out the various defects along the line to enable you to effect the necessary repairs as already advised.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY.

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., Manager T.M.L.R. Co.*

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,
General Manager's Office, Hobart Town, 8th July, 1879.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant, and in reply have to inform you that it is impossible for me to accept the general statements of the Engineer-in-Chief as a notice to repair, nor is it all reasonable to expect that I could do so.

The matters on which I have requested information are those of the most petty detail, which the Company have officers to especially attend to; and had Mr. Fincham mentioned them at the time of his observations to any of the inspectors or gangers, they would immediately have been corrected. If he will now send some one along the line to point out what is objected to, I can promise that such will be made right before the end of the week.

In the whole of the questions submitted to Mr. Fincham there is not one which is not so entirely trivial that I should be justified in wasting my time (which is now very fully engaged on behalf of the Company) in personally inspecting. If the repairs are urgently necessary, they ought to be done, and I will see that they are; but each inspector positively denies that such faults exist in his district, and I am therefore under the necessity of asking precisely where they occur.

I presume by the Chief Engineer's reply to me of the 7th instant, that he has handed to you my letter of the 4th instant, which I thought was written in exact compliance with your desire: until the questions therein submitted are replied to nothing farther can be done.

I have, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

Lands and Works Office, 12th July, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, requiring fuller information respecting the necessary repairs to the Main Line Railway.

I have already in my letters of the 3rd and 7th instant informed you that the Engineer-in-Chief is ready at any moment to go over the line and specifically point out the defects complained of, and therefore cannot understand why, if there be a desire on your part to do the work, you do not avail yourself of the offer.

In your communications since Mr. Fincham's Report was submitted to you, I have observed that you have carefully avoided any reference to the more important defects which he has pointed out; viz., "dangerous rails, defective break gear, and insufficient protection to trains for want of proper signalling arrangements," and confined yourself entirely to the less important matters of detail.

I now have the honor again to call upon you to remedy the defects of the line pointed out in the Engineer's Report without delay.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands & Works.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., C.E., General Manager,*
T. M. L. Railway, Hobart Town.

Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited,
General Manager's Office, Hobart Town, 15th July, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, and observe that you do not give me the information I have twice asked for, as a necessary preliminary to replying fully to the Report of the Engineer-in-Chief.

Since, therefore, I cannot verify the general statements, and my answer—if founded on the Reports of the Inspectors of the Line—must be an absolute denial of the correctness of nearly all Mr. Fincham's statements, I will not trouble you with a controversy, but venture to suggest that if Mr. Fincham would, at his convenience, call at my office, where are all the plans of the Line, he could point out to me what matters he considered to be of real importance, and I will endeavour to meet his views.

Many of the trifling defects in maintenance he mentions, being of a purely temporary character, were corrected in the ordinary course of repairs before the Report was sent in. Other works are in precisely the same condition as they have been in for the last four years, and simply require watching to be always perfectly safe; a few are of no moment whatever, or are simple misconceptions, but a little labour bestowed upon them would improve their appearance; while the remainder represent simply differences of opinion, in which my care and experience is entitled to consideration; for you may rely upon it that such have received a most careful attention, since the whole responsibility of failure or mishap has hitherto rested on me alone. Nevertheless I shall be happy to discuss all such items in a liberal spirit, and I do not apprehend that we shall differ as to what is really essential for the safe working of the Line.

As regards the condition of the rails, which is really the only important point mentioned, I do not suppose that Mr. Fincham saw even one of the imperfect rails noticed by Mr. Greene, such having all been removed and replaced, for the renewal is continuous, each ganger being provided with a supply of fresh rails and sleepers, while there is a reserve at each terminal station.

At the present time a large supply of new steel rails is almost due per the *Berean*, and the *Ethel* has sailed with another consignment. These new rails are specially rolled to the order of the Company, and weigh 46 lbs. per yard, but are of such a section as to work in with the ordinary 40lb. rails. Other consignments will follow as freight can be obtained, without reference to the limit of 350 tons mentioned in the Report. The new fastenings will also be somewhat heavier.

I feel sure you will give the Company full credit for the liberal manner in which they maintained the Permanent Way under circumstances of extreme financial difficulty; and now such is entirely removed, they are not likely to be found wanting.

I refrain from comment on the remarks in your letter now under acknowledgment, feeling sure they were framed in partial oblivion of my previous letters, and to reply thereto would only lead to an irritating and profitless correspondence.

I have, &c.

C. H. GRANT.

Hon. C. O'REILLY, M.H.A., Minister of Lands and Works.

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 31st July, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant on the subject of repairs to the Main Line Railway, which an absence on official business in the North has prevented my attending to until now.

In reply I have to state that the Engineer-in-Chief, in company with Mr. G. F. Lovett of this Department, acting under instructions from the Government, will attend at your office on Saturday next, at 10.30, if convenient to you, in order to ascertain finally whether it is the intention of your Company to perform the necessary repairs to the works and rolling-stock of the Main Line Railway indicated in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief lately forwarded to you.

Mr. Fincham will at the same time, in compliance with your request, and as far as practicable, point out upon your "plans" the positions of the defective works detailed in his Report.

All the defects pointed out by the Report of the Engineer-in-Chief are considered of "real importance," and their remedy necessary in order to put the Railway in *good and efficient repair and working condition*, as required by Sec. 5 of 34 Vict. No. 13. Therefore the Government, acting in the interest of the travelling public, consider it to be their duty to require the Main Line Railway Company to carry out the necessary works without further delay.

I have, &c.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., General Manager T.M.L.R.C.*

Land and Works Office, Hobart Town, 31st July, 1879.

MEMORANDUM.

I DESIRE that the Engineer-in-Chief, in company with Mr. G. F. Lovett of this Department, should wait upon the General Manager of the Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company on Saturday next, or on such other day as may be arranged, and point out upon the Railway plans the positions of the defective works detailed in a recent report by the Engineer-in-Chief on the state and condition of the Main Line Railway and works.

I also desire that they should ascertain finally whether it be the intention of the Company to perform the necessary repairs to the works and rolling-stock of the Main Line Railway indicated in the Report above referred to, recently made under Clause 5 of the 34 Vict. No. 13, as necessary to put the line in good and efficient repair and working condition.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

TELEGRAM.

Launceston, 1st August, 1879.

WILL you kindly have Mr. Fincham's call with me postponed until Wednesday next, at 11 A.M., since I have urgent business in Launceston?

C. H. GRANT.

Hon. C. O'REILLY, Minister of Lands and Works.

TELEGRAM.

Hobart Town, 1st August, 1879.

POSTPONED until Wednesday.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., Launceston.*

Lands and Works Office, Hobart Town, 7th August, 1879.

SIR,

WE have the honor to report that, in accordance with instructions received from the Government under date 31st July last, we waited upon Mr. C. H. Grant, the General Manager of the Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, on Wednesday, the 6th of August, to afford such information as Mr. Grant desired, and to ascertain finally whether it was the intention of the Company to perform the repairs indicated in the Report furnished to him dated the 19th June last, as necessary to put the Works and Rolling Stock of the Railway into good and efficient repair and working condition.

The whole of the matters dealt with in that Report were discussed, *seriatim*, and the position of any required work pointed out to Mr. Grant upon his plans as requested by him.

Mr. Grant admitted many of the defects, but stated that as they had existed for some time he did not consider them as calling for immediate attention; he agreed to remedy such of the others as had not already been attended to, including the renewal of every rail that was weak from having a portion broken out of the "head;" also, the very important matter of signal protection at the Swing Bridge over the River Derwent at Bridgewater, the better control of the heavy goods trains when descending the steep inclines, and the repairs generally, with the exception of providing signals at stations, to which he demurred.

In reference to the requirements for a further stock of rails for renewals, Mr. Grant stated that 150 tons of steel rails, weighing 46 lbs. per yard, were afloat on board the ships *Berean* and *Ethel*; and that a letter from his Directors dated 6th June last contained advices of a further quantity of 150 tons of similar rails that would be shipped in the *Wagoola* or *Lufra*.

In concluding our interview we submitted the question contained in our instructions to Mr. Grant, and obtained his reply thereto in writing, and have now the honor to forward the same for the information of the Government.

We are happy to report that the manner in which the different points were discussed by Mr. Grant leads us to hope that no time will now be lost in putting the whole undertaking in that condition which will be satisfactory to the Government, and gain it the full confidence of the travelling public.

We have, &c.

JAMES FINCHAM, *Engineer-in-Chief for Tasmania.*

GEORGE F. LOVETT, *Ministerial Clerk.*

The Hon. C. O'REILLY, Minister of Lands & Works.

*Tasmanian Main Line Railway Company, Limited, General Manager's Office,
Hobart Town, 6th August, 1879.*

WE are instructed by the Government to wait upon you to ascertain finally whether it is the intention of your Company to perform the necessary repairs to the works and rolling stock of the Tasmanian Main Line of Railway, indicated in the Report of the Engineer-in-Chief, dated the 19th of June last.

JAMES FINCHAM, *Engineer-in-Chief.*

GEORGE F. LOVETT, *Ministerial Clerk.*

C. H. GRANT, *Esq., General Manager,
Tasmanian Main Line Railway.*

REPLY.

HAVING gone through the Engineer-in-Chief's Report with him personally, and explained that some of the matters he reported on had, since his inspection, been attended to in the ordinary course of repairs, and the difficulty in at once carrying out other recommendations, I find that there is little real difference in opinion, and that substantially I am willing to perform his requirements in the manner we have mutually decided upon, the exception being signals at stations, without unnecessary delay.

C. H. GRANT.

6th August, 1879.