

(No. 59.)



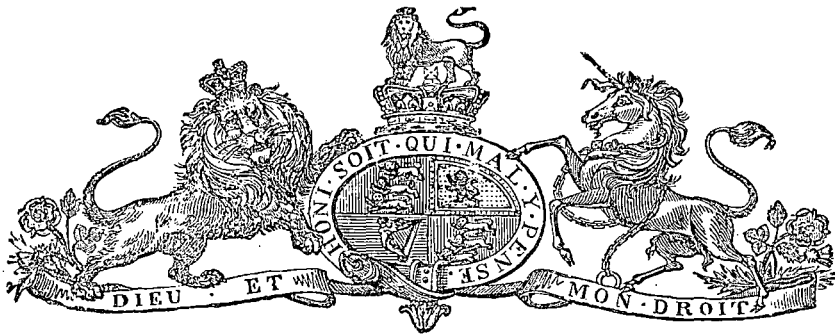
1864.

T A S M A N I A.

LAUNCESTON AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 28 July, 1864.



Launceston and Western Railway Offices, 3rd March, 1864.

SIR,

1. I HAVE the honor to place before you, for the information of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the decision of the Committee of Promoters of the Launceston and Western Railway on the question of the aid which, in their opinion, the Government of the Country must render before the Northern and Western Districts will realise the benefits attendant on Railway communication.

2. But I am to state that the Committee are still of opinion, that so conclusive and satisfactory a case has been made out for the construction and maintenance of a Railway within the said Districts that the Local Government ought to undertake the work. Similar works in New South Wales, South Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, Queensland, and New Zealand have been constructed, and are in progress, by the Governments of these several Colonies, without any responsibility being thrown on the particular Districts through which the Lines pass beyond the general responsibility borne by the whole Colony.

3. It has, however, for a long period of time been evident to this Committee, that the Parliament of the Country is not yet prepared to admit that the duty of the Government of Tasmania lies in this direction; and that it is expected that the Districts through which the Line passes, with those immediately adjacent to the Western Terminus, will consent to bear the responsibility of some form of re-guarantee, at least for the interest of capital supplied.

4. Under such circumstances, the Committee have now approached the consideration of this question with an earnest desire to adopt such a plan for recommendation to their fellow Colonists in the Districts referred to as may be acceptable to His Excellency in Council and to the Parliament, and I am therefore instructed to submit the following Proposals:—

- (1.) That a Railway District should be formed, to comprise the Town of Launceston (which for the purposes of this Act should be deemed a Road District), the Road Districts of Patterson's Plains, Breadalbane, Longford, Carrick, Westbury, Exton, Deloraine, Chudleigh, Upper Meander, Midhurst, and part of Evandale.

In order to meet an objection against the rates (if any are incurred) being equally levied upon properties distant from the Rail, and those having better access to it, a Clause might be introduced in accordance with the Irish system, empowering (say) the Governor in Council, or the Commissioners hereafter named (should the necessity of making a Rate ever arise, and when it arises), to appoint an Arbitrator or Arbitrators, who shall determine the proportion to be paid by the several Road Districts or portions of Districts. *Vide* 12 & 13 Victoria, cap. 62, (Irish Railway Bill.)

- (2.) That the Governor shall cause an Election to be made by the Ratepayers in the said several Road Districts, in accordance with the provisions of "The Cross and Bye Roads Act" of Commissioners for the purposes of the Railway Act, and that the Governor shall appoint other Commissioners, and that these Commissioners shall together form a Board of Railway Commissioners.
- (3.) That the Government shall be empowered to raise a sum of not more than £400,000 by the issue of Debentures secured on the General Revenue of the Colony, (and, when constructed, on the Railway Works,) bearing interest at not more than 6 per cent. per annum, and payable in years, to be advanced to the said Commissioners for the construction of the said Railway.

- (4.) That the Bill shall provide that the Commissioners shall annually set apart and invest, out of the receipts of the Railway, not less than £3000, to be so invested in the name of the Colonial Treasurer, for the purpose of paying off the Debentures when due; but towards the Railway Revenue the Government should be authorised to contribute £3000 per annum.

The Committee deem it desirable that, whilst the contribution from the Revenue may be limited to the small sum of £3000 a year, the Commissioners should have power to invest more than this sum per annum whenever the profits allow.

- (5.) That, in the event of any deficiency arising in the sum derived from traffic charges, necessary for the payment of the annual interest on said Debentures, the Commissioners to be empowered to levy a rate to meet such deficiency.
- (6.) That whenever, by the profits of the undertaking, by Rates levied in the District, by Mortgage of the Works, or by any other means, the Revenue of the Colony has been freed from all liability on account of the Railway, the property of the Line be secured to the Inhabitants of the Districts liable to assessment.

5. In submitting these proposals as the basis of legislation, it is the wish of the Committee that I should state, for the information of His Excellency the Governor in Council, that after careful consideration they are satisfied that no arrangement can be of any practical value which does not provide that the security tendered to foreign capitalists for raising the necessary funds shall be in the form recognised and understood by prior transactions on the London Stock Exchange; any departure from the form of the ordinary instruments known as Government Debentures would depreciate the securities, if not render them unsaleable. If floated at all, they would only be placed at a very large discount, and consequently would greatly augment the cost of the proposed Railway.

6. The Committee are aware that representations have been made that a company of shareholders may be created for the purpose of constructing and working this Railway. On this question I am to submit portions of a Report made by this Committee to their constituents at a large public meeting held at Launceston on the 29th May, 1863, and which Report was unanimously adopted by the meeting. These extracts are as follows* :—

“1. To attempt to divert Tasmanian capital from its legitimate use in the agricultural and commercial business of the country, even if it were practicable to find sufficient colonial capital, would be impolitic and unwise.

“2. That foreign capitalists will not take up the work on less advantageous terms than those paid by other countries; Railway Companies for India having been guaranteed 5 per cent., and for the Cape of Good Hope, 6 per cent., on very large investments; and this guarantee is made for 50 years;” (and to this fact may be added, that the guarantee is practically on an unlimited capital; i.e. it is a guarantee of 6 per cent. interest on the whole sum of money necessary for the construction of a given number of miles of rail, without a specified maximum cost per mile.)

“3. The cost of floating a company in London, and of maintaining a Board of Directors and their Staff in London, would be very large in proportion to the proposed capital of £400,000.

“4. It would not only be cheaper to construct the Railway by a direct issue of Government Debentures, but the Colony would then possess the Railroad as its own property; whilst, if in the hands of a company, the company would retain the property, and take the profit accruing above the interest of 6 per cent.,—a profit which would continue permanently to go out of the Colony into the pockets of non-resident shareholders, instead of being devoted to the reduction of the debt, or of the rates of carriage, or to the extension of the Line.”

7. I now desire, Sir, respectfully to leave this grave question under the consideration of His Excellency in Council, and beg to express the earnest hopes of the Committee, and myself, that the Colonists we have the honor to represent may be at length relieved of the anxiety which has oppressed them for years past, during which period their neighbours and customers in Victoria have been rapidly perfecting their Railway system; and I will add the expression of my hope, that this relief to the people may proceed from the acceptance by His Excellency of the proposals now thus respectfully made.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

RICHARD DRY.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Hobart Town.

* See Parliamentary Papers 1863, p. 52.

Launceston and Western Railway, 2nd April, 1864.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to invite your attention to my communication of the 3rd March last, on the subject of the Launceston and Western Railway, and have respectfully to beg the favour of an early answer thereto.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

RICHARD DRY.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Hobart Town.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 5th April, 1864.

SIR,

IN reply to your letter of the 2nd instant, I am directed to acquaint you that the accident to the Colonial Secretary has hitherto prevented the due consideration of the subject to which your communication of the 3rd ultimo relates; but that no unnecessary delay shall take place, when the conclusions arrived at will be made known to you.

I have, &c.,

B. T. SOLLY.

Sir RICHARD DRY, Quamby.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 16th April, 1864.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter under date the 3rd March, in which you "place before me, for the information of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the decision of the Committee of Promoters of the Launceston and Western Railway on the question of the aid which, in their opinion, the Government of the Country must render before the Northern and Western Districts will realize the benefits attendant on Railway communication."

Your letter, its statements and proposals, have received at the hands of my colleagues and myself the most careful and dispassionate consideration; and I have now to communicate to you the definite decision of the Government upon the whole subject of the Launceston and Western Railway.

But, before proceeding to deal with the specific proposals contained in the fourth paragraph, I think it right to notice the preliminary statements and observations of the second and third paragraphs of your letter.

You say (paragraph 2)—"The Committee are still of opinion that so conclusive and satisfactory a case has been made out for the construction and maintenance of a Railway within the said Districts that the local Government ought to undertake the work."

I would remind you that these two questions—namely, the conclusiveness of the case made out for a Railway, and the obligation on the Government to undertake the work—were precisely the questions raised in Parliament last Session, when the adoption of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Deloraine Railway was moved in the Legislative Council by yourself, and in the House of Assembly by Mr. Douglas. In both Houses, on the occasions referred to, both these questions were determined in the negative. The Motion submitted by yourself was negatived without a Division. In the House of Assembly the consideration of the Report was set aside to make way for the discussion of Resolutions identical in substance with the proposals you have submitted to me. Those Resolutions were rejected by a large majority of the Members of the Assembly sitting in Committee of the whole House, after a protracted and exhaustive debate.

Whatever, then, may be the opinion of the Committee of Promoters of the Railway, the Government cannot overlook the fact that the tribunal to which the Promoters have submitted their case has declined to pronounce it "conclusive and satisfactory;" has abstained from expressing an opinion "that the Government ought to undertake the work;" and has already refused its assent to proposals substantially the same with those which you now ask the Government to accept "as the basis of legislation."

The Government cannot overlook the weight and significance of the decision and accordant expression of their views on this subject by both branches of the Legislature.

But I am spared the necessity of insisting on this point, since the third paragraph of your letter contains an expression of opinion which embodies a statement of fact to precisely the same effect. You say—"It has for a long period of time been evident to this Committee that the Parliament of the Country is not yet prepared to admit that the duty of the Government of Tasmania lies in this direction;" namely, the construction and maintenance of Railways at the public expense as Government Works.

It would be impossible to state the views of the Legislature on the subject of the Deloraine Railway in language more emphatic and precise. And I might justify the disinclination of His Excellency's Advisers to adopt the proposals of the Promoters as a Government measure upon this admission alone.

I am certainly entitled to require some more "conclusive and satisfactory" arguments than the Committee now adduce, to substantiate a demand that "the Government of Tasmania" should undertake a "duty" which it is admitted "the Parliament of the Country is not prepared" to assign to it.

You remark in the same paragraph, "that it is expected that the Districts through which the Line passes, with those immediately adjacent to the Western Terminus, will consent to bear the responsibility of some form of re-guarantee, at least for the interest of the Capital supplied."

You omit to state by whom this expectation is entertained. But, assuming from the juxtaposition of this sentence with the context of the previous allusion to the views of "the Parliament of the Country," that your language points to some expectation of this sort on the part of the Legislature, I am bound to state my dissent from that proposition.

I am not aware of any circumstances, since the subject of the Western Railway was last discussed in Parliament, which can be taken to indicate that the views of the Legislature have undergone any modification on this point. On the contrary, I am of opinion that the admission I have quoted from the third paragraph of your letter correctly describes the prevailing sentiment of both Houses last Session, when dealing with the Report of the Joint Committee; and that the same question would be similarly disposed of were it now suggested to Parliament as a subject for legislative action.

And I must also remind the Promoters that the Resolutions moved in the House of Assembly, as a substitute for the Report of the Joint Committee, contained proposals, I am bound to say, more definite, intelligible, and satisfactory than those now submitted by the Promoters, in which provision was made for a sinking Fund to pay off the principal Loan, and for a re-guarantee from the Districts through which the Line passes for the interest of capital supplied.

Those Resolutions would have also provided that "at least three-fourths of the Freeholders of the proposed Railway District" should declare their willingness to be assessed for the payment of any deficiency in the annual interest before the Railway works were commenced.

The deliberate rejection of a proposal so definite and so satisfactory as a test of local confidence in the projected Railway affords no countenance for the supposition that the House of Assembly would now consent to entertain a scheme containing no more than a vague promise of "some form of reguarantee at least for the interest of capital supplied."

But the Government has not been exclusively influenced in its treatment of this question by a knowledge of the mind of Parliament. The proposals of the Promoters have been considered on their merits, as the outline of a scheme involving some serious financial consequences, and the determination of a principle of action in the construction of works of a similar character.

The proposals set forth in the fourth paragraph of your letter are in substance briefly as follows:—

- (1.) That the Railway shall be constructed at a cost of £400,000, with the proceeds of Debentures secured on the General Revenue, bearing interest at 6 per cent. per annum.
- (2.) That the Government should contribute annually £3000 to "the Railway Revenue."
- (3.) That "not less than £3000" should be annually set apart from "the receipts of the Railway" to form a sinking Fund for the redemption of the Debentures.

(4) That "the sum derived from Traffic charges" shall be applied to meet the annual interest on the Debentures, and any deficiency in such sum shall be made good by a Rate levied on the Districts through which the Line passes.

(5) And that whenever by the accumulation of the sinking Fund by profits, or by mortgage on the Works or Rates, the Revenue shall be freed from liability on account of the Railway, the Line shall become the property of the "Railway Districts."

The first point for the consideration of His Excellency's Advisers, when asked to embody this scheme in a Bill to be brought into Parliament as a Government measure, is its financial bearing upon the Revenue and the public credit of the Colony.

To suggest the raising of £400,000 by issue of Debentures secured upon the General Revenue can only be regarded by the Responsible Ministers of the Crown as a proposal to augment the Public Debt to little short of double its present proportions.

The scheme now urged upon the adoption of the Government requires the credit of the Colony to be pledged to that extent, in addition to its existing liabilities; and that scheme further requires that immediate legislative provision should be made for meeting the annual interest on the debt thus created, and for "a contribution to the Railway Revenue of £3000 a year" for an indefinite period; and beyond this present demand upon the Revenue, there remains the liability of the Colony for the eventual redemption of the Debentures.

It is true, no doubt, that your proposals contemplate an annual investment of "not less than £3000" from "the receipts of the Railway" as a Sinking Fund" to pay off the Debentures when due;" and provide that the sum derived from the traffic charges should be made liable for the annual interest, to be supplemented, when required, by a rate levied on the Railway District.

The realisation of funds adequate to these purposes from the sources indicated in the proposals, however confidently it may be anticipated by the Promoters, must be regarded by a prudent Government as a problematical, perhaps an improbable, contingency.

But the liability for the contribution of £3000 a year for the annual interest on the Debentures, and for the extinction of the debt, constitutes a definite and inevitable obligation on the present and prospective Revenue of the Colony.

At a time when it has been found necessary to impose additional fiscal burdens on the people in order to surmount a crisis of financial embarrassment, the Government might reasonably hesitate to incur the responsibility of proposing to Parliament to place the Treasury under such a large additional liability to the public creditor, even for the construction of works of a strictly national character.

But to this designation the Government is of opinion that the Railway intended to connect Launceston with Deloraine can make no legitimate pretensions. The most careful and deliberate investigation of the whole case submitted by the Promoters for the judgment of Parliament has convinced the Government that the Western Railway must be dealt with as a local undertaking, the construction and maintenance of which the Legislature is confessedly not prepared to make a charge upon the General Revenue of the whole Colony.

And here I may most conveniently notice the reference, in the second paragraph of your letter, to the Railways of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, New Zealand, and the Cape Colony.

With scarcely an exception, these Railways are all national works; arterial lines of communication between commercial capitals or ports on the seaboard and the interior of the Colony. The Railroads of Victoria and New Zealand, with the exception of the Lyttleton and Christchurch Line (an indispensable necessity for the port and capital of Canterbury), have been constructed with the special design of facilitating the means of access to the Gold-fields of those countries.

The Railways of none of the Colonies instanced by the Promoters can be legitimately cited as in any way analogous to the projected line between Launceston and Deloraine.

The Government is also bound to consider with scrupulous care the possible effect of so large an issue of new Debentures upon the present value of Colonial securities. The evidence taken before the Joint Committee on the Deloraine Railway has not tended to convince the Government that apprehension on this score is altogether groundless.

And the recent rejection in the London market of proposals for loans for similar works, secured upon the General or Provincial Revenues of New Zealand, must be accepted as a lesson of warning and of caution to the Executive Government of Tasmania.

In connection with this subject, I am called upon to notice your statement of the opinion entertained by the Promoters on the subject of the shape in which the securities for the Railway Loan ought to come into the open market. You state (par. 5) that, "after careful consideration, the Committee are satisfied that no arrangement can be of any practical value which does not provide that the security tendered to Foreign capitalists for raising the necessary funds shall be in the form recognised and understood by prior transactions on the London Stock Exchange; any departure from the form of the ordinary instruments known as Government Debentures would depreciate the securities, if not render them unsaleable. If floated at all, they could only be placed at a very large discount."

This suggestion would seem to betray a distrust on the part of the Promoters of the commercial feasibility of their [whole] project. The connection of the loan with the construction of a work of national dimensions and a reproductive character—and in this light the Promoters represent the Western Railway—ought to enhance rather than depreciate the value of the securities.

But the anxiety displayed in the passage quoted from the fifth paragraph of your letter to suppress the actual relation between the Debentures and the purpose for which the capital is required seems to argue a secret misgiving in the minds of the Committee, that the local object of the Railway, and its doubtful prospects of commercial success, disentitle it to the credit of a national undertaking and the confidence of Foreign capitalists.

I must add, that this disinclination to allow the object of the loan to transpire upon the face of the securities is scarcely consistent with the suggestion in the 3rd Proposal, that the Debentures should be "secured upon the General Revenue, and when completed on the Railway works."

Either this proposal is altogether illusory, or there can exist no grounds for the apprehension of the Committee as stated in the fifth paragraph of your letter.

If, however, such apprehensions are seriously entertained by the Promoters, the Government need be at no further pains to justify its hesitation to become responsible for a scheme which fails to command the confidence of its authors in this essential particular.

There is another point suggested by the Proposals which I am unwilling to pass without notice, though I desire to avoid entering into a discussion of the details of the scheme you have submitted to the Government.

The sixth Proposal provides "that, whenever by the profits of the undertaking, by Rates levied in the District, by Mortgage of the Works, or by any other means, the Revenue of the Colony has been freed from all liability on account of the Railway, the property of the Line be secured to the Inhabitants of the Districts liable to assessment."

The real effect of the scheme the Government is asked to adopt would be the construction of the Railway at the public expense and with the aid of the public credit, so far as relates to the "capital supplied," and its maintenance, at least in part, by an "annual contribution" from the Treasury of £3000 for a period of years.

Under these circumstances I am unable to acknowledge the equity or propriety of making provision for the ultimate possession by the proposed Railway District—a single section of the Colony—of the whole property in a costly work executed by the Government with funds derived from the contributions to the General Revenue of the community at large.

Nor can I forbear to remark, that this claim to the ultimate local appropriation of the Railway is equally inconsistent with the suggestion that it is a work of a national character, and with the demand that it should be undertaken by the Government at the cost of the Colony.

I am of opinion that a work of this class, should it ever become self-supporting and reproductive, ought to be retained by the Government for the benefit of the Colony as a source of annual Revenue.

And I am fortified in this view by the opinion at one time entertained by the Promoters of the Western Railway.

In the extract from the Report of the Committee of Promoters printed amongst the Sessional

Papers of 1863, which you have quoted in the sixth paragraph of your letter, I find the following statement used as an argument for the construction of the Railway with Government Funds :—"It would not only be cheaper to construct the Railway by a direct issue of Government Debentures, *but the Colony would then possess the Railroad as its own property.*"

Looking, then, at the fact which the Committee have admitted at the outset, that "the Parliament of the Country is not prepared" to assign to the Government the execution of works of this class; and that it has specifically declined to authorise the construction and maintenance of the Launceston and Western Railway at the public cost and with the aid of the public credit, on terms substantially identical with those now submitted by the Committee; and looking at the general circumstances of the Colony, the local character of the projected undertaking, and the possible effect upon the Revenue and the Public Securities of the Colony of the financial operations involved in the adoption of the Committee's proposals "as the basis of Legislation,"—His Excellency's Advisers have come to the conclusion that it is not desirable to bring the proposals set forth in your letter under the consideration of the Governor in Council.

I cannot conclude this communication without pointing out to the Committee of Promoters that recent occurrences are calculated to dispel the conviction so strongly expressed in the extract you have quoted from the Committee's Report; namely, that it would be impracticable or impolitic to accomplish the Deloraine Railway under the auspices of "a Company of Shareholders."

The formation of such a Company for the execution of a cognate undertaking designed to connect Deloraine and the "Districts adjacent to the Western Terminus" with a Port of Shipment on the Mersey will probably suggest to the Promoters of the Deloraine Railway that the sanction of the Legislature and the co-operation of the Government are not absolutely indispensable to enable "the Northern and Western Districts to realize the benefits attendant on Railway communication."

In conclusion, I am desirous of reminding you, on the part of the Government, that the Deloraine Railway has never, from its earliest suggestion, been dealt with in Parliament as a Cabinet question. It was debated last Session as a question on which the Members of the Government were under no obligation to act in concert, but spoke and voted with the simple responsibility of individual Members of the Legislature. And so far as His Excellency's present Advisers are concerned, the same question will be similarly dealt with whenever it may at any time be made the subject of Parliamentary enquiry or legislative action.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

JAMES WHYTE.

The Hon. Sir RICHARD DRY, Knt., M.L.C.

Launceston and Western Railway Office, 2nd May, 1864.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, informing me, with reference to mine of the 3rd March last, that "His Excellency's advisers have come to the conclusion that it is not desirable to bring the proposals set forth" in my letter "under the consideration of the Governor in Council."

2. Had your reply been limited to this statement, however much I might have regretted your decision, further correspondence would have been unnecessary; but your letter, I regret to say, contains misconceptions as to portions of my communication which I cannot pass over without explanation.

3. Before entering upon the details, however, I desire to say, generally, that the proposals submitted to you for the Governor in Council were intended to mark the course which the Committee representing the northern Colonists supposed would be most acceptable to the Executive, rather than as forming a final plan to which alone the Colonists would agree; for it had to be kept in mind that the Executive Government only could introduce to Parliament any "Money Bill" giving effect to the popular desires. For instance, the proposal that not less than the sum of £3000 should be yearly invested for the extinction of the debt was a proposition forced upon the consideration of the Colonists by a former Executive, and was only suggested now under the impression that it would be insisted on by the present Government; but the Committee felt it to be a very novel proposal that such a debt should ever be extinguished unless by future profits of the undertaking; and it would, doubtless, be more acceptable to the Colonists that the Western Railway should, in this respect, stand on the same footing with the Railways in other parts of the world,

and with other public works in the Colony. In this and other respects the Promoters have reason to complain that, year after year, successive Executive Governments have forced upon them the duty of making suggestions to meet the objections of the Government,—and now they are very unfairly charged with presenting to the Government ever varying proposals.

4. In immediate reply to your letter of the 16th ultimo, I will refer first to the 22nd paragraph, page 17, which is as follows:—

But the liability (1) for the contribution of £3000 a year, (2) for the annual Interest on the Debentures, and (3) for the extinction of the debt, constitutes a definite and inevitable obligation on the present and prospective Revenue of the Colony.

The proposals made by me were simply these:—

- (1.) That the Parliament should enable the Road Districts, under the provisions of *The Cross and Bye Roads Act*, to elect Commissioners to construct the Railway.
- (2.) That the Government should raise the capital of £400,000 by Debentures.
- (3.) That the Districts should be responsible for yearly interest.
- (4.) That the Bill should provide for £3000 at least being yearly invested by the Railway Commissioners, in the name of the Colonial Treasurer, for the redemption of the Debentures when due: that the Parliament should authorise an annual payment of £3000 from the public funds in aid of the Railway.

5. By the transposition of these two last conditions, the character of the proposals of the Promoters is so far altered as to appear to bear out, in some degree, the statement made in your 22nd paragraph: but I submit that the only “definite and inevitable obligation on the present and prospective Revenue of the Colony” would be the small contribution of £3000 per annum, to which the Promoters believe themselves entitled on the principle laid down by *The Cross and Bye Roads Act*; the whole of the Interest, should any deficiency arise, being chargeable on the Districts, and the payment of the principal moneys being provided for by the investment of at least £3000 as a Sinking Fund. In both cases the security would be such as to free the Government from any possibility of loss.

6. In the 25th paragraph of your letter you say that the Railways of the Colonies referred to in mine of the 3rd of March, as having been constructed by the respective Governments, are all “arterial lines of communication between commercial capitals or ports on the sea-board and the interior;” and that the “Railways of none of the Colonies instanced can be legitimately cited as in any way analogous to the proposed line between Launceston and Deloraine.”

7. I respectfully submit that it is just in the very characteristic your letter indicates that the Western Railway is strictly analogous to the cases cited by me, namely, that it is an arterial line of communication between a commercial port and the interior districts, of which Launceston is the recognised capital. Again; whilst it may be true that in Victoria and New Zealand Railways have been generally constructed with “the special design” of facilitating “the means of access to the gold fields,” (but this cannot be said of the Geelong line, of the first line of New South Wales, nor of the Echuca extension in Victoria), the result of their construction has been to give facilities to agriculture, and thus to increase the necessity for Railway communication between the Districts named in my letter of the 3rd of March—Districts which will be utterly ruined as centres of population, and profitable fields of agricultural industry, if the policy your letter indicates is long to prevail in the Councils of this Country.

8. I regret exceedingly that you should have thought it necessary, in commenting on the form of security to be offered to the foreign capitalist, to reflect, as you have done, on the motives of the Promoters; and I submit most confidently that no fair reading of the 5th paragraph of my letter can justify the construction you have put upon it in paragraphs 30 to 35, inclusive, of your reply.

9. It became my duty, in addressing you on the 3rd March, to call your attention to the fact that one of the numerous reasons which, in our opinion, render it necessary for the Colonial Treasurer to issue Debentures for Railway construction was this: that “no arrangement could be of any practical value which did not provide that the security tendered to foreign capitalists, for raising the necessary funds, shall be in the form recognised and understood by prior transactions on the Stock Exchange;” and that any “departure from such form would depreciate the value of such security, and would, consequently, increase the cost of the Railway.” You are pleased to say, that in this statement I displayed an anxiety “to suppress the actual relation between the Debentures and the purpose for which the capital is required.” I beg respectfully, but emphatically, to assert that this is a most unfair rendering of the plain meaning of the 5th paragraph of my letter. In common with the Promoters, I was necessarily aware that Debentures issued by the Government for Railway construction would be issued as Railway Debentures. I may add, that we were also

aware that the effect of the issue of Debentures for such an improvement of any portion of the Colony must be to enhance the value of every out-standing security at present held by the public creditor. The Committee of Promoters have shown their perfect confidence in the "commercial success" of the undertaking by the heavy responsibility they are prepared to take upon themselves in common with other northern Colonists, and have certainly done nothing to merit the remarks contained in the 32nd and three following paragraphs of your letter.

10. With respect to the scheme of a Tramway to the Mersey, to which you refer, I am confident that there is a common feeling of interest on the part of the Western Railway Promoters in the success of any well-digested project for giving access to the Mersey. No Company has, however, yet been formed, as stated in your 46th paragraph; and when I am aware of the fact that without a Government Guarantee the Corporation of Hobart Town and Launceston were not able to borrow some £100,000 for their Water-works notwithstanding the Corporate character of the borrowers, and the large existing assessed capital they had to offer as security, and when the few thousands required for the erection of the South Esk Bridge could not be raised without a Government guarantee in addition to the ample security offered by the mortgage of the Rates of the District, I may still doubt the success of such an undertaking without the direct co-operation of the Government. But should such co-operation enable the construction of the Mersey Tramway, there will still remain the pressing necessity for Railway communication between Deloraine and the Districts of Westbury, Cressy, Longford, Perth, and Evandale with Launceston; and I shall still entertain the opinion that the diversion of local capital from more legitimate fields of industry, instead of borrowing money abroad, would be both impolitic and unwise. Doubtless a Railway Company can be formed in London on terms similar to those paid by the Cape of Good Hope; *i. e.*, a Government guarantee of 6 per cent. for a period of 50 years; but I have endeavoured to show in my letter of the 3rd of March why this form of foreign aid should not be invoked.

11. In this place it will be most convenient to notice the 29th paragraph of your letter, in which you say that the "recent rejection in the London market of proposals for loans for similar works in New Zealand must be accepted as a lesson of warning and of caution to the Government of Tasmania." The promoters are in possession of the opening Address of the Superintendent of Otago to the Provincial Council so lately as the 7th of April instant, in which special reference is made to this question of the New Zealand Debentures; and it so aptly illustrates the absolute necessity for all Colonial securities offered on the London Stock Exchange being duly authorised by the Parliament of the Country—as we have represented in the case of the Western Railway—that I beg to transcribe the following passages:—

"With reference to these Debentures (says his Honor), you are doubtless already aware of the fact that, up to the time of the departure of the last mail, the whole of our half million loan remained unnegotiated. The high value of money which has ruled in the English market from the time the Otago debentures were placed upon it has, doubtless, had a prejudicial effect on its sale; but in order to account for this loan being apparently an unmarketable security, other causes more influential than a temporary scarcity of money must be in operation. Among these causes may, I think, be ranked the following:—

1. Our real position as a province, and nature of our securities, are neither fully known nor recognised in Great Britain.
2. Our provincial loans, although assented to by the Governor of the Colony, not having the sanction of an Act of the General Assembly, are not even admitted to quotation on the Stock Exchange.
3. Competition with the numerous loans now in the London market, including those of Foreign States, our own Dependencies, Colonies, and Provinces, but more especially the New Zealand War Loan of three millions, which, as a colonial security, from the superior position it appears to occupy as compared with a purely provincial transaction, cannot fail to exercise a depreciating effect upon the latter."

"Assuming that in the event of no material change occurring in the money market of Great Britain, and in the absence of additional guarantees, our half-million loan will continue for a considerable time undisposed of, the only course I can confidently recommend is, that, by Resolution or otherwise, you join me in strongly urging upon the General Government of the Colony the absolute necessity of their immediately pledging the country to a *guarantee* of the loan, so that it may be placed in the British market on as favourable a footing as the Colonial War Loan, which is now in course of negotiation through an accredited Member of the New Zealand Government.

12. I submit that this experience of the Province of Otago confirms the opinion the Western Railway promoters have already expressed to you—that no security of a local character, unsanctioned by a distinct Parliamentary guarantee, will be acceptable on the Stock Exchange. This view is fully sustained by the fact that, whilst Debentures issued by the Provincial Legislature of Otago, and proposed to be secured on the ample resources of its public lands and revenues, were "not even admitted to quotation on the Stock Exchange," the New Zealand War Loan of three millions of money was, at the same time, in course of negotiation.

13. With reference to the 13th paragraph of your letter of the 16th April, I beg to say that the Promoters are of opinion the Cross and Bye Roads Act provides ample protection to property, in the mode of voting it prescribes. But this question, in common with many other details, was necessarily left to the decision of the Parliament, in the event of the Government

consenting to legislate on the Railway question at all. And I may add here, that we admit the Western Railway has never been dealt with in Parliament as a Cabinet question; for the palpable reason that, hitherto, the proceedings in Parliament have been almost limited to the necessary preliminary enquiries. I must again remind you that no private member can initiate a "Money Bill," such as the Railway Bill must necessarily be; and that, consequently, the time has now arrived when the aid of the Executive is indispensable if the views of the Promoters (or any modification of these views) are to be realised.

14. In conclusion, I can scarcely believe you to be serious when saying that the proposals made by me on behalf of the Railway Promoters contemplate "no more than a vague promise of some form of reguarantee, at least for the interest of the capital supplied;" because one of the leading proposals offered by my letter for the consideration of the Governor in Council was, that your Bill should provide power to levy a rate on the districts to meet any deficiency in the sum derived from traffic charges for payment of annual interest.

15. On this point I submit that, if the Ratepayers adopt the risk of making up deficiencies of interest, and providing a Sinking Fund to pay off the capital, they are fairly entitled to possess the Railroad as the common property of the districts they occupy; and this view is in no wise inconsistent with the paper you quote (1863), which proposed that the General Revenue of the Colony should pay the half of any yearly deficiency of interest; and, indeed, whilst using the general terms "the Colony would possess the railway," as an argument against employing a London company, suggested, in the very same paragraph, that any profit, after paying the interest, might be devoted to the local objects of reducing the rates of carriage or extending the line.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

RICHARD DRY, *Chairman.*

The Hon. JAMES WHYTE, Esquire,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 27th May, 1864.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 2nd instant, in reply to mine of the 16th April, in which I conveyed to you "the definite decision of the Government on the whole subject of the Launceston and Deloraine Railway."

It is not my intention to enter into a discussion of the explanations you have offered in your last letter of those portions of your former communication which appear to you to have been misconceived in my letter of the 16th April.

His Excellency's Ministers have attentively considered the tenor of those explanations, together with the additional statements and allegations with which you seek to strengthen your original demands, and justify the terms of the proposals submitted to the Government by the Committee of Promoters.

I am, however, unable to convey to you the assurance that your last communication has effected any change in the views entertained by the Government on the subject of the Western Railway.

At the same time, I am desirous, on the part of the Government, to disclaim any intention of "reflecting" in any way "on the motives of the Promoters" in my notice of the terms in which your letter of the 2nd March intimates the views of the Committee as to the shape in which the Railway Loan ought to be placed before foreign capitalists.

My observations on the fifth paragraph of that letter went no further than to remark upon the apparent inconsistency between the proposal to secure the Debentures "on the Railway works, when completed," combined with the confident reliance of the Promoters on the commercial success of the undertaking, and the stipulation that the capital required for its construction should be borrowed upon securities that contained no mention of the actual object of the Loan.

I should much regret that any expressions in my last letter should be regarded by yourself, or by the Committee, as designed to question the sincerity or impugn the motives of the Promoters.

The Government is willing to believe that the Committee are sincerely impressed with a conviction of the commercial feasibility of the scheme they have so long and so energetically urged upon the Legislature.

I trust the Committee will give His Excellency's Ministers credit for an equally conscientious anxiety, in dealing with the Western Railway, to protect the financial interests and public credit of the Colony.

I have, &c.

JAMES WHYTE.

The Hon. SIR R. DRY, M.L.C., Quamby.

To His Excellency Colonel THOMAS GORE BROWNE, Commander of the Most Noble Order of the Bath, Governor-in-Chief of Tasmania and its Dependencies, &c.

The Memorial of the undersigned Colonists in the Districts of Evandale and Patterson's Plains, in the said Colony.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT so long ago as the year 1857 large and influential meetings were held in Launceston, and in other Towns of the Northern Division of the Island, with a view to promote the construction of a Railway from Launceston through Morven, Longford, and Westbury to Deloraine.

That, from the said year to the present, Resolutions and Petitions adopted at public meetings of the inhabitants, duly convened, have been from time to time addressed to the Government of the Colony, earnestly entreating that this great modern means of communication may be given to the Districts referred to ; and Memorialists respectfully solicit Your Excellency's attention to these various Petitions and Resolutions.

That Memorialists respectfully represent to Your Excellency that the evidence and reports from time to time published by order of the Parliament are deserving of being deemed conclusive in favour of the project : that so complete a case has probably never been before a Legislature, embracing, as it does, authentic statistics, a most carefully prepared survey and plans, and a tender to construct the line from the house of Messrs. Peto, Brassey, & Co., whose position as contractors, and whose large resources, give ample security for the prompt and honorable fulfilment of any engagement they may enter into.

That every day's experience of the requirements of the Districts referred to, and of the Railway progress of the neighbouring Colony of Victoria, tends to confirm Your Excellency's Petitioners in the belief of the absolute necessity which exists for the introduction of Railway communication into the Northern Districts of this Colony.

That a singular unanimity exists in the Districts to be affected by the proposed Railway. That during the years 1862 and 1863 the Petitions in favour of the Railway were signed by 2342 and 3041 Colonists, whilst the Petitions against the project have been signed only by 51 persons in 1862 and 138 in 1863 ; and that these latter Petitions were not so much against railway construction as against the principle of local responsibility, which the majority of the people are willing, under certain conditions, to incur.

Memorialists therefore pray Your Excellency to cause a Bill to be prepared and submitted to Parliament on its re-assembling having for its object the early construction of the Launceston and Western Railway.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.,

[Here follow 108 Signatures.]

To His Excellency Colonel GORE BROWNE, C.B., Governor in Chief of Tasmania, &c.

The Petition of the Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Launceston, in Council duly assembled.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT Petitioners have marked with deep interest and sympathy the public efforts of their fellow Burgesses in the promotion of measures calculated to secure to the Northern Districts, of which Launceston is the recognised Capital, the great benefits of Steam Communication between the said several Districts and between them all and Launceston.

That Petitioners, understanding that the Inhabitants of the said Districts are prepared to accept a Legislative enactment authorising the construction of a Railway between Deloraine, Westbury, Bishopsbourne, Longford, Perth, Evandale, and Launceston, which would involve an amount of local responsibility never yet sought to be imposed by the general Government of any British Colony, are therefore of opinion that the said Inhabitants have a peculiar claim upon Your Excellency's consideration.

That the agitation of this question commenced in the year 1857, and has, therefore, occupied the public attention for a period of seven years, during which time a large amount of money has been subscribed and expended, and numerous Petitions have been presented to Your Excellency and your predecessors in the Government; and at this moment the conviction of the people on this question not only remains unabated but is increasing in intensity.

That Petitioners believe the early construction of the Western Railway is absolutely necessary to the existence of these Districts as agricultural communities,

Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that Your Excellency will be pleased to adopt such measures as may be necessary to give to the people of these Districts, during the forthcoming Session of Parliament, such legislative authority as may be necessary to give effect to their wishes as expressed in their numerous Petitions on this subject.

And Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

MONDAY, JULY 4, 1864.

MINUTE No. 184.

THE Governor lays before the Council Petitions from Launceston, signed by 1309 persons; Deloraine, signed by 583 persons; Westbury, signed by 288 persons; Longford, signed by 200 persons; Ringwood, signed by 187 persons; Evandale and Patterson's Plains, signed by 108 persons, praying that His Excellency will cause a Bill to be prepared and submitted to Parliament having for its object the early construction of the Launceston and Western Railway. Also, a Petition from the Mayor and Aldermen of Launceston to a similar effect.

The Council decline to advise His Excellency to comply with the prayer of these Petitions; and the Clerk is instructed to inform the Petitioners accordingly.

Executive Council Office, July 4, 1864.

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR Petition, [together with one from the Inhabitants of Launceston generally], praying His Excellency the Governor to cause a Bill to be prepared and submitted to Parliament having for its object the early construction of the Launceston and Western Railway, having been considered by the Governor in Council, I am directed by His Excellency to forward to you, by way of reply, an Extract from the Minutes of the Council of this date.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. C. NOWELL.

The Mayor and Aldermen, Launceston.

SIMILAR letters (omitting the words in brackets) to—

The Hon. Sir R. Dry and the other Petitioners, Westbury.

T. K. Archer, Esq., ditto, Deloraine.

H. B. Nickolls, Esq., ditto, Longford.

Ditto, ditto, Ringwood.

John Ralston, Esq., ditto, Lymington.

*E. C. Office,
July 5, 1864.*

*To His Excellency Colonel THOMAS GORE BROWNE, Governor-in-Chief, and the
Executive Council of Tasmania.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned Landholders.

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT we, the under-mentioned Landholders, protest against the passing of any Act of Parliament based upon the Report of the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament appointed in 1863, to enquire into the question of a proposed Railway from Launceston to Deloraine, for the following amongst other reasons :—

1st. That the proposed Launceston and Deloraine Railway can only be viewed as a *local* and not as a public or national work.

2nd. That a great number of the Petitioners in its favour are persons holding no real property in the Railway District which is to reguarantee the Government against any loss likely to arise, many others who hold property (such as those at and near George Town) are beyond the boundaries of the said Railway District, and therefore neither of those sections of the Petitioners would be affected by the main and obnoxious principle of the proposed Railway Bill,—that of a reguarantee. We also believe that very many merely look to the advantages they would probably temporarily derive from a large expenditure of money in the Northern part of the Colony in the construction of said Railway.

3rd. That we have no objection to the construction of a Railway, or any number of Railways, if established upon the principles adopted in the formation of British Railways, but we emphatically protest against our properties being made responsible against our wills by any form of reguarantee for any loss on the proposed Railway.

4th. That the boundaries of the proposed Railway District as recommended (if there could be a Railway District) will operate most unjustly and inequitably, as it includes considerable areas which would positively be injured by the Railway, other areas which could *not* be benefited to any appreciable extent, and at the same time *excluding* large areas which would be benefited to an equal or greater extent than much that is *included*.

5th. That the lands most distant from Launceston (on the Line of Railway) would derive the greatest advantages from it, and should therefore bear a proportionate responsibility, if any.

6th. That our objections to any reguarantee are supported by our conscientious belief that the estimates of traffic upon which the calculations of income are based are fallacious, as much of the produce, &c., of the Western Districts, and goods from Launceston, would not require rapidity so much as cheapness of transit, whereas it has been shown that the tariff of charges per Railway would be considerably higher than that at present by the common roads.

7th. That, in the opinion of many, the estimate of the amount of traffic has been exaggerated ; and it is most desirable, before any legislation to affect us takes place, that the Government should themselves adopt means efficiently to test and check the accuracy of the published statements. We do not believe the proposed Railway will pay the current expenses and the annual interest on capital invested.

8th. That we are fully aware of the importance of, and advantage to be derived from, Railways ; but we contend that Promoters or parties directly interested in their construction and establishment should do so, as in Britain, at their own risk and on their own responsibility, seeing that the advantages to be gained would be personal and local, and not public and general.

9th. That confidence in their own estimates and calculations should be sufficient to enable the Promoters to form a Railway, if such is required by them.

10th. That it is most unsound, as well as unjust in principle, that any active minority of interested individuals should compel a large number of dissentients to mortgage their properties to contribute *nolens volens* to keep up a Railway for their benefit and to increase the value of their properties.

We beg to append various data and statistics in support of this our Protest.

Launceston, 22nd February, 1864.

	Area of Property.	Value of House Property.	No. of Houses.
	ACRES.	£	
William Bracey .....	..	200	1
William York, by J. C. ....	..	250	1
John Carter .....	..	10,000	10
Josephs' Estate, by John Carter, executor .....	..	6000	12
Thomas Jarvis	Town Allotment	70	
Helen East .....	..	150	1
Ellen Trinder .....	..	100	1
Frederick Bushby .....	..	400	1
George Griffiths	126	4000	8
F. J. Houghton	140	3000	5
Henry White .....	..	1500	1
Jacob Webb .....	..	2500	11
John Webb .....	..	200	
Henry Filey .....	..	500	3
William Lowry .....	..	100	1
Josiah Pitcher	200	3000	5
Robert Callow	3	800	4
James Kennedy .....	..	1000	14
John Cole .....	..	2000	4
Edward Peacock .....	..	400	2
Thomas Butcher .....	..	500	2
James Brice .....	..	140	1
George Bailey .....	..	140	1
George Frake .....	..	400	5
Daniel Woodfield .....	..	375	5
William Prior .....	..	150	1
Jessie Duckett .....	..	500	1
William Dean .....	..	400	1
James Tolman .....	..	200	1
Richard Stevens .....	..	150	1
Randal Risely	2	400	5
George Grey	1	200	2
William Gilbert	70	700	1
Elizabeth Thirkell, Launceston .....	..	800	
John Cox, ditto .....	..	400	
Edward Monaghan .....	..	200	
Daniel Cox .....	..	300	
Thomas William Field	7205	..	22
Thomas Handley, Hadspen and Carrick .....	..	2000	8
James Goodger, Carrick .....	..	100	2
Henry Crockford, ditto .....	..	700	3
William Rogers .....	..	500	2
Robert Paling .....	..	200	
Robert M'Leod .....	..	100	1
Robert Beck .....	..	320	2
Thomas Simmons	500	..	
Joseph Baskell .....	..	44	
Joshua Peck	215	..	1
George Collins, Evandale	2260	..	2
Edw. Dumaresq (I protest against a re-guarantee)	3300	..	
John C. Jamieson, of Ellerslie .....	..	..
Henry Stevenson, land at Patterson's Plains	83	..	13
M. Edwards, Launceston .....	..	..	24
D. J. Griffith, Longford .....	..	..	3
Robert Thirkell, Woodstock, ditto	{ 2000 } 200 10	{ 200 acres, Longford. 10 acres, Perth Launceston Launceston Westbury Perth	1 4 4 2
W. M. Dean	5000		
Thomas Dryden	1000		
John Dryden	450		
James Reid	3½	60	
George Hill .....	..	150	1
Philip Gilbert .....	..	100	1
John Pearson, Evandale	1000	2000	1
John Cooper, Longford .....	..	1000	1
Charles Richards, Launceston .....	..	80	2

	Area of Property.	Value of House Property.	No. of Houses.
	ACRES.	£	
George Clancy, Westbury.....	..	2000	1
James Eadle, Muddy Plains.....	..	500	1
Ephraim Digby, Launceston.....	..	600	2
Ellen Jones.....	..	{ Perth	1
		{ Launceston	2
Daniel Higgins.....	..	..	1
Aaron Masters.....	..	..	2
David White.....	..	..	5
Benjamin Holder.....	..	..	1
Charles Kerslake.....	..	..	4
Thomas Moore.....	110	..	9
Edward Thorn.....	..	..	1
William Saltmarsh, senr., Longford.....	1450	..	
Thomas Saltmarsh.....	200	..	
Richard Saltmarsh.....	300	..	
William Brooks, Launceston.....	7	..	1
John Saltmarsh, Longford.....	..	..	1
Alexander Rankin, Launceston.....	..	..	4
Thomas Barnett, owner.....	210	..	
James Goodger, ditto.....	2675	1200	1
George Burnett, ditto.....	120	..	
Thomas Beams, ditto.....	170	..	
Joseph Stanley, ditto.....	367½	..	
Daniel Foley.....	2	..	
Thomas Turner, Hadspen.....	..	500	1
William Hatfield, ditto.....	..	400	4
Charlotte Murfatt, ditto.....	..	800	4
James Featherstone, ditto.....	..	150	1
John Perkins.....	..	80	1
Charles Govett.....	736	..	
John Stevens, owner, Longford.....	90	250	1
James Jordan, ditto.....	70	..	
Richard Wise, ditto.....	143	..	
George Cox, ditto, Launceston.....	400	1000	1
Robert Wise, ditto.....	100	..	
John James Laird.....	90	..	
Thomas William Hortle..... { owner.....	120	..	
	rented.....	50	
Edward W. Hammant, owner.....	150	..	
John Goodman, ditto.....	40	..	
James Saltmarsh, ditto.....	400	..	1
Sarah Suffolk, Longford, ditto.....	..	300	1
George Gould, Launceston, ditto.....	380	1000	1
Charles Herbert, Longford, ditto.....	60	..	
Alexander Garcie, ditto.....	370	..	
James Keane, owner.....	6910	1000	1
Thomas Fall.....	80	..	17
Abraham Banks.....	..	..	1
John Hannay.....	100	..	4
William Barrett.....	175	..	
William Sidebottom.....	..	..	7
Joseph Bruff.....	..	..	10
George Collins.....	3000	..	2
D. Cameron.....	13,150	..	10
George Stancombe.....	2180	..	1
William Lawrence.....	11,936	Perth	
Thomas Reibey, by his Attorney, Charles Arthur	8000	..	10
E. W. Wightman, ditto.....	5000	..	
A. Stewart, Launceston.....	4060	..	8
James Scott, ditto.....	2242	{ Launceston	3
		{ Deloraine	1
		{ Westbury	1
George Thomas Scott, by J. Scott, his Attorney	30	..	1
William Mason.....	438	..	7
James R. Scott, by his Attorney, J. Scott.....	2520	..	5
James Cox, Clarendon.....	22,000	..	
Alexander Rose.....	3160	..	3
Thomas Dryden, Haggston.....	1700	..	

	Area of Property.	Value of House Property.	No. of Houses.
	ACRES.	£	
John Williatt	8000	..	7
William Marshman	45	..	2
G. T. Matthews	40	..	1
Joseph Senior	160	..	1
James Thomson .....	..	..	3
James Harris .....	..	..	1
John Youl	3000	..	2
Francis Southernwood	12	..	1
George Croome	10	..	1
Joseph Benjamin	10	..	5
Joseph Clayton	50	..	10
John Clayton	8	..	1
Charles Chilcott	1331	..	

Clarendon, 12th February, 1864.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received yours of yesterday's date, and wish I was well enough to join you and others in your proposed intention of waiting on Messrs. Whyte and Meredith on the subject of the guarantee to the proposed Railway.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

JAMES COX.

JAMES SCOTT, Esq.

Fordun, 25th February, 1864.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD made arrangements to start this morning by Ayton's conveyance for Town, but missed it, and could not get in early enough to be present at the Deputation, which I regret very much.

In haste,

Sincerely yours,

D. CAMERON.

JAMES SCOTT, Esq.

Mount Ireh, by Longford, 25th February, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR,

I MUCH regret having to state that ill health prevents my attending to-day with the Deputation, to protest against the mortgage of our lands under any name or in any manner for Railway purposes.

Yours truly,

EDW. DUMARESQ.

To JAMES SCOTT, Esq., Launceston.

Evandale, 25th February, 1864.

SIR,

I AUTHORISE you to attach my name to the Protest against the reguarantee for the proposed Launceston and Deloraine Railway. The area of my land is about 8000 acres, and seven houses ; and if too late, to forward this along with the Protest.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JNO. WILLIATT.

Mr. JAMES SCOTT, Launceston.

FORWARDED to the Hon. James Whyte, to go with the Protest presented this morning.

JAMES SCOTT.

25th February, 1864.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 11th April, 1864.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a Petition addressed to the Governor, which His Excellency has forwarded for the consideration of the Ministry, protesting against the passing of any Act of Parliament based upon the Report of the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament appointed in 1863 to enquire into the question of a proposed Railway from Launceston to Deloraine.

I beg to assure you and the gentlemen signing the Petition, that the Government will give that earnest attention to the Protest which the importance of the subject demands.

I have, &c ,

JAMES WHYTE.

ALEXANDER ROSE, *Esq., M.H.A., Launceston.*