

Pialba.

Mr. E. B. C. Corser, chairman of the Burrum Divisional Board, and Mr. N. E. N. Tooth waited upon the Colonial Treasurer on Thursday week with reference to the proposed Pialba Railway. Mr. Corser has since placed the following proposal before Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who is now considering it:—

“We have the honour in accordance with your request to submit in writing the proposal of the board in connection with the Pialba railway. The proposal of the Burrum Divisional Board in connection with the construction of the Pialba railway is as follows: That the Treasurer grant sufficient Treasury bills at 6, 8, or 10 years without interest for the cost of constructing the Pialba line from Colton (Burrum railway line) to Pialba, a distance of 16 miles, on the route already permanently surveyed by the Government, the estimated cost of which, according to estimates obtained by the board, would be from £20,000 to £25,000. The Burrum board will undertake to pay interest at 5 per cent on the Treasury bills to the contractors. The contractors will be offered such bills in payment for the construction, and must look to the board solely for the interest. This they are satisfied the contractors will accept. The rails taken up from the Gympie-Maryborough railway and light locomotives and other rolling stock which, the board understand, the Railway Commissioners have no use for, could be obtained at a small cost, and be adequate for this line, as it is nearly level. The estimates the board have obtained show

that the work can be completed for the sum named, and the board have reason to think that if necessary the Maryborough municipality would join in the guarantee of interest if required by the Government for any alteration of this proposal, but they are satisfied that the board's own guarantee will be accepted by the contractors. The board have laid the scheme before suitable contractors, who have already intimated their willingness to construct the line taking payment of the above described Treasury bills providing that a tender would be accepted within a reasonable time. There would be very little land to resume, as the land from Colton to Pialba passes (until it reaches the Pialba Scrub) through Crown lands, which would of course be increased in value by the line. The capital value of No. 1 subdivision of the Burrum Board, through which the line would run, is £12,370, and if a railway were constructed this value would be increased by nearly 50 per cent. If the line cost £25,000, and it paid only working expenses, it would necessitate the levying of a special rate of 2d. only; and if the Municipal Council or the No. 2 subdivision Burrum Board joined, this would be considerably reduced, and the enhanced capital value caused by the construction of the railway would reduce the rate per pound on that tax as well as the one now made for repairing and making roads, and we have every reason to believe that there would be no necessity to levy such a rate, as the line would pay interest. . . . The board propose that when the Treasury bills fall due the Government should pay them, and take over the line; but they are prepared, if the Government prefer it, to accept the whole liability as a loan from the Government under the Local Works Loan Act of 1880.”

THE PIALBA RAILWAY.

The member for the Barrum (Mr. N. Tooth) has addressed the following letter to Mr. J. B. Stephens re the meeting at Pialba next Saturday:—

"Dear Sir,—I am duly in receipt of your note intimating that a public meeting of Pialba residents will be held on the 9th instant for the purpose of 'Considering the best means of constructing a railway to Pialba,' and inviting me to be present thereat; an invitation that I most cordially accept. This meeting will I think be a move in the right direction, as it must necessarily strengthen the hand of the Board and also my own as Member for the District. I need scarcely assure you that I am heartily with you in your desire to get this line. I am much pleased to see that at last the Pialba residents are making a stir to back up the Board in this matter. In my opinion, it is a moot question whether instead of waiting the chance (and it is a chance) of the Railway Construction Guarantee Act passing the Upper House this coming season, we should not pursue a bolder course, of which there are two at least open to us:—

"1st. To get a private bill passed, enabling the Board to construct a light line on somewhat similar terms, as the proposed Railway Guarantee Act; or

"2nd. Construct a light line under the Tramway's Act of 1882, of which clause 5 enacts: 'Any local authority having control for the time being, of any part of the streets in which is intended to be laid a tramway, may construct, maintain, and work a tramway upon and through any street or other place with all proper rails, plates, workings, siding junction stations, approaches and conveniences connected therewith, and may enter upon, purchase, take and use any land registered for these purposes.'

"Clause 88 says: 'Subject to the provisions of the Act, and notwithstanding any restriction or limitation imposed by any other Act, the Council for local authority may, for the purposes, construction, or extension of a tramway borrow moneys from the Colonial Treasurer under the provisions of the Local Works Loan Act of 1880.' (Note—Local authorities may borrow from the Government but not from private lenders.)

"I may here mention that the Railway Commissioners have repeatedly, in course of conversation assured me that in the event of the Board constructing this line they would give us every facility and assistance in working same. However, I will possibly have more to say on this matter at the meeting.

"I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

" N. TOOTH."