**Beecroft Road Matter 1892**

**Cumberland Mercury (Parramatta, NSW: 1875 - 1895), Saturday 23 January 1892, page 6**

THE BEECROFT ROAD MATTER.

PURSUANT to the promise made in last Saturday's issue of this paper, a representative of the MERCURY visited Beecroft on Saturday last, to ascertain the truth in reference to the alleged "great injustice" done to the district by the Government, in adopting the Hannah-street approach to the local railway station. It will be remembered that within the past few weeks some very strong allegations have been made in a paper printed in this town —chiefly to the effect that dirty work on the part of one or two residents of Beecroft had been the means of bringing about an alteration so far as the main approach to the station was concerned—and an alteration calculated to prove a hardship to the people of the district and an injustice to the country generally. Our representative went to some trouble to obtain full particulars in this matter; and, as might have been anticipated by anyone who had had the good fortune to see the letters on the subject, written by Mr. WHTTTELL (secretary of the local Progress Association), in the Daily Telegraph, it was very soon explained by those who knew the whole history of the affair, that "the boot was entirely on the other leg."

The two streets in dispute form the two longer sides of a parallelogram, the ends of which are Beecroft Parade and Cardinal-avenue. The site of the Beecroft station is at present just opposite the intersection of Copeland-street and Beecroft Parade; and were it intended that it should remain so, there might be something in the allegations made by those whom, for the purposes ''of reference” we shall designate hereafter the malcontents. But, as it will be shown further on, the position of the station is to be changed; and, as anyone will be able to understand, who has read, even, say, nothing but the intemperate and exaggerated statements made on the other side, this new factor in the case alters the aspect of everything materially. The site of the citation is really the point on which the whole matter turns; - though there are one or two other points of considerable importance to be noticed - all of which, nevertheless, we contend, only render the complaints more and more absurd the more they are dispassionately investigated.

The first statement made is that the Government proposed to "open out" Copeland-street. This is admitted on all sides; but any statements other than that which the auctioneer

may have made at the time the land was sold on behalf of the Government, the Department now avers were made on his (the auctioneer's) own authority. Attention to this point is justified, not so much by any chance of ascertaining what was really pledged by the auctioneer on the occasion in in question, as by the consideration that the malcontents in this Copeland-street matter hang their whole case upon the promises said to have been so made. With the public - who have been invited to form an idea on the equity of the transaction right through - there is something more to be considered, i.e., the general wisdom and fairness of the action of the Government, certain new considerations having come into the field in a perfectly legitimate, though hitherto unforseen manner. The site of the station, when the Government promised to open up Copeland-street through to the Pennant Hills Road, was at the end of Copeland-street; but the Railway Commissioners, having regard to the desire of the district residents to enjoy the advantages of a railway siding, and, further, to reject their (the Commissioners') own arrangements, decided, entirely on their own incentive and on their own responsibility, to place the new station now in course of erection - as we may as well point out) some 100 or 150 yards farther to the north, and opposite the end of Hannah-street. Leaving out the main consideration (as the case is regarded from the malcontents’ standpoint) - the alleged breach of faith on the part of the Government - the matter now presenting itself as of the greatest possible interest is: Which line of route promises the better road? On this point there cannot be two opinions; and the writer of the articles in favour of Copeland-street stands plainly convicted of an inability to do justice in the dispute, - because, if for no other reason, of his studied efforts to have the two roads dealt with as if similar in character. As a matter of fact, and this is the point most strongly emphasised by local residents (for the broken-pledges plea is looked upon, locally, as a myth), - taking the station as situated where it will be when the work in hand at present has been brought to completion, the distance between the Pennant Hills road and the railway outlet is the same by either Hannah-street or Copeland-street. Taking the station as at present situated, (though there will be no traffic to it, simply because there will be no siding there) there is a difference of something over 100 yards in favour of Copeland-street. Hannah-street runs along a ridge broken only by one dip, carrying at the lowest point a creek a few feet in width, which could be bridged for a sum of from £60 to £80. The work of clearing and forming this road - that is, putting in necessary culverts, and making the bed of the road fit for traffic - would cost about £260. Indeed, a tender for something like that amount has already been sent in, by a man anxious to do the work. To do the road by Copeland-street, the Government officer estimates would take £1200. Such are the figures as given to us - and after we had been along the two routes we saw little reason to cavil at them. As before pointed out, there is one grade on the Hannah-street line from the high land near the station down to the only watercourse to be negotiated. There is another spot, we admit, where water would cross the road in wet seasons; but as a small flat culvert - making little or no difference to the contractor, so far as the cost of roadmaking is concerned - would alone be required, it is hardly necessary to refer to it. On the Copeland-street route there are three creeks to be crossed, the smallest of which would require a bridge equal to or larger than the one necsssary in Hannah-street; and at one spot—the worst—where the. watercourse is, in wet seasons, a very river, a bridge, costing, perhaps, £800, would be necessary - that is, if the Government consented to place one there at all. The three Copeland-street watercourses, with their respective heavy grades, occur within a length of a few hundred yards, making the road about the worst possible to be imagined, for traffic.

How absurdly unfair the allegations lately made, are to the men living in Hannah-street (and for whom the mud thrown was no doubt intended), will at once be understood when the following facts are studied: - Shortly after the land at Beecroft was sold, the residents petitioned the Government to redeem the promise made, about opening out

Copeland-street, to the Pennant Hills road. This the Government did - by purchasing (for £600) certain land belonging to Maher's orchard. Then the residents (those for whom the mud lately thrown was intended, being included), petitioned the Government to bridge the creeks crossing Copeland-street, and to put that road in a condition fit for traffic. This the Government declined to do, alleging that the expenditure sure to be involved (£1200) was out of all ratio to the traffic likely to be carried. (Thus, the Government gave evidence - clear, surely, to unbiased minds - that their promise to the original land-buyers was to open Copeland-street; a work duly carried out, as we have shown above!) The Government proposed to make a ford through the larger watercourse; but this idea did not please the residents of the district. The Government then promised to give further consideration to the application for bridges, etc., on Copeland-street, provided the Beecroft people obtained from the Railway Commissioners a siding at the station - a factor important in relation to the creation of traffic. The people of the district approached the Commissioners, who, however, pointed out that the grade on the railway line at Beecroft Station would not admit of a siding being put in. It was proposed, however (the Commissioners said) to shift the station further north; and there a siding could be made. Of course, (the shifting of the station to a point directly opposite a street possessing far better grades entirely altered the aspect of the matter, so far as was concerned the early formation of Copeland-street - apart from all considerations as to the latter's terrible hills and valleys; but it has suited some special pleaders to disregard that very weighty point. Now that we have disposed of the whole matter—we invite any persons (members of Parliament or others), who may not be indisposed to make arrant fools of themselves, to take the matter up (as has been suggested elsewhere). We, like the Government, are inclined to think that money has been saved to the country over the affair; and we are not surprised that the Government official who suggested the Hannah-street route (after hearing of the proposed shifting of the station) should have been complimented before this by his superior officers. Common sense and justice have triumphed in the matter pretty well, it would seem; and the impressionable young writers who have allowed themselves to be got at, and who have, in their silly eagerness to criticise, thrown mud at honourable men (able workers in every effort for the advancement of the district) may safely be advised to pause, and pick up a few simple ideas about grades and bridges, before dropping again into heroics over "road-making scandals."