

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

HOKITIKA AND GREYMOUTH RAILWAY COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE).

Brought up and ordered to be printed 5th December, 1879.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

WEDNESDAY, THE 19TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1879.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee, consisting of Mr. Macandrew, Hon. Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Masters, Mr. McLean, Mr. George, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Wood, Mr. Bunny, and the Mover (three to form a quorum), be appointed to inquire and report to this House upon the expediency of diverting the proposed line of railway between Hokitika and Greymouth, in order that it may pass through or be connected with Kumara, Goldsborough, and Stafford Town. The Committee to have power to call for papers and persons, and to report in a fortnight."—(*Mr. Reid.*)

REPORT.

THE Select Committee which was appointed to inquire into and report upon the expediency of diverting the proposed line of railway between Hokitika and Greymouth, in order that it may pass through or be connected with Kumara, Goldsborough, and Stafford Town, have the honor to report as follows:—

That they have carefully considered the question referred to them, and have taken evidence thereon of Mr. Blair, Engineer in Charge for the Middle Island; Mr. O'Connor, District Engineer for Westland; Mr. Wyde, civil engineer; Mr. Brown, Registrar-General; and the Hon. H. H. Lahmann, M.L.C.

The proposed diversion would lengthen the line by about ten miles; but no complete survey has as yet been made which would furnish a reliable estimate of the additional cost of construction which the diversion would entail.

The Committee are of opinion that, in the case of no great additional expenditure being caused by the diversion or of any steep gradients being necessary, the connection of three comparatively large centres of population by a loop line with the termini of Hokitika and Greymouth would insure a much larger reproductiveness than can be anticipated from the original line along the beach. A vast extent of valuable land, rich in timber and minerals, would be opened up; a large increase of goods and passenger traffic would be secured; and permanent settlement promoted.

The Committee feel assured that the diversion of the line in the manner indicated would in every respect prove to be of greater advantage than by the construction of two branch lines to Kumara and Goldsborough. The length of line in the former case would be shorter, and the necessary additional expenditure for plant of £5,000 on each branch line, together with the working expenses, estimated at £25 per week for each of the branches, would be obviated.

The Committee therefore recommend that a survey should forthwith be made to show the best line of diversion and its probable cost; and, should the cost of the diversion not increase the original estimate of the whole line, or only necessitate a small addition thereto, that the works should be proceeded with in the direction indicated immediately upon the survey being completed.

While the survey is being proceeded with, no delay need take place in the formation of the line to the Arahura and Teremakau Rivers, nor in the construction of the bridges over these two rivers.

The Committee would therefore further recommend that these works be in the meantime prosecuted with all practicable despatch.

5th December, 1879.

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R. C. REID,
Chairman.