

AWATERE TO HURUNUI.

The construction of this coast-line could only be justified on the ground that it might form part of a future main trunk railway, as it would open but a very limited area of agricultural land in proportion to the cost of the work.

We consider the proposal to be altogether premature.

BLENHEIM TO ROUNDPELL.

Neither the extent of agricultural land in the district which this line would traverse, nor the prospect of increased settlement to arise from its construction, is sufficient to induce us to recommend expenditure upon it.

FOXHILL TO BELGROVE.

This short extension, which is now completed, or nearly so, will render more available a moderate amount of bush-country, sufficient to justify the cost of the work.

BELGROVE TO ROUNDPELL.

Except as part of a trunk line from Nelson to Greymouth, this section would not yield a return sufficient to warrant its construction, which we cannot, therefore, recommend.

ROUNDPELL TO NELSON CREEK.

Between Roundell and the Hope there is no inducement to agricultural settlement. Between the Hope and Nelson Creek, although the mineral wealth of the district is beyond dispute, the industry connected with it does not afford sufficient traffic to warrant the large outlay required for the construction of this line. Owing to the great extent of bush-land which is now opened up by railways throughout the colony, there is not sufficient inducement to make a railway on account of the timber.

That the west coast of the Middle Island does not offer much inducement to agricultural settlement, is patent from the fact that, notwithstanding the large population which has been employed in gold-mining for the last fifteen years, and the consequent demand for agricultural produce at extreme prices, the total area of land cleared for farming purposes during all those years is of such very limited extent. The character of the country is difficult throughout, and the portion of the work between Hampden and the Inangahua Junction would be very costly.

The length of this line from Belgrove to Nelson Creek is 140 miles, and the estimated cost £1,200,000.

NELSON CREEK TO BRUNNERTON.

This extension would form the key to the traffic of the whole of the mining districts of the Grey Valley, and would improve the receipts of the existing section. It could be worked with economy on account of the low price of fuel and the small addition to the present staff which would be required. We recommend its construction without delay.

NELSON TO MOTUEKA.

The line would run for many miles of its length through poor and broken country, and is rendered less necessary by good and far more direct communication between Nelson and Motueka by water.

WESTPORT TO INANGAHUA.

This would be an exceedingly costly work, and would afford no present prospect of a reasonable return for the outlay.

WESTPORT TO NGAKAWAHO.

In our opinion this line should not have been begun until the coal-owners were in a position to put traffic upon it; and we think that haulage rates should be charged upon a scale calculated to meet, as far as possible, the interest upon the large cost of its construction.