

however, believed that they give a fair representation of the country, for much of the information on which they are based was procured from the Lands Department and other trustworthy sources.

### RAILWAY SYSTEM PROPOSED.

*Present Proposals.*—After full investigation and considerable discussion, the question of routes may now be held as settled, at any rate so far as the lines in immediate prospect are concerned; and in my opinion the decisions arrived at are undoubtedly correct. The lines in immediate prospect comprise the following:—

1. A railway commencing at Springfield, in Canterbury, and proceeding by the Waimakariri Valley, Arthur's Pass, and Lake Brunner to Brunnerton, on the Grey River—a distance of 95 miles.
2. The completion of the railway along the coast from Hokitika to Greymouth—a distance of 24 miles.
3. A railway commencing at Brunnerton, and proceeding by Reefton, Inangahua Junction, and Tophouse to Belgrove, the terminus of the Nelson Railway—a distance of 154 miles.
4. A branch railway from Inangahua Junction down the Buller Valley to Westport—a distance of 27 miles.
5. A connection from Tophouse down the Wairau Valley to Blenheim, a distance of 63 miles.

*Future Connections and Extensions.*—In addition to the railways above enumerated the maps show further connections and extensions that may be required in the future to open up the country, and make the system complete. They are given now, so that it may be seen how far the present proposals work in with the general railway system for the Middle Island and the whole colony.

*Works already Executed.*—A small quantity of work has already been executed on three of the lines above referred to, viz.:— $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles of the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway have been finished, and  $4\frac{3}{4}$  miles partly formed. On the Nelson-West Coast line,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles of formation have been finished at the Belgrove end, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile partly done at the Brunnerton end. The expenditure and liabilities on these sections up to the 31st ultimo are,—

						£
Hokitika-Greymouth	...	...	...	...	...	41,839
Nelson-West Coast	...	...	...	...	...	28,523
Total						£70,362

On the line southwards from Blenheim the formation has been done for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles more are in progress. The expenditure and liabilities are £32,858.

*Surveys.*—Of the lines under the present proposals, working surveys on which contracts can be let have been prepared for the whole of the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway and a section at each end of the Nelson-West Coast line; Wai-iti to the Blue Glen, 17 miles; and Stillwater to Nelson Creek,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles. A working survey has also been made of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles of the line south of Blenheim, beyond the point up to which the present contract extends.

Detailed preliminary surveys of a very complete description have been made of the East and West Coast line, and the heaviest portion of the main line extension by the East Coast. Similar surveys, but less in detail, have also been made of the Nelson-West Coast line, including the branch to Westport, and of the extension southwards from Blenheim as far as the Awatere River.

Reconnaissance surveys only have been made of all the other lines shown on the maps; but the information with reference to them is sufficiently complete to enable a good idea to be formed of the kind of railways that can be got, and the character of the country through which they pass. It is expected that in every case 1 in 50 gradients and  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -chain curves can be got.

*Distances.*—Appendix B gives in tabular form the distances between the principal centres and other important points on the various lines under discussion. It is inserted to facilitate reference, as the numerous routes and junctions are very confusing to any one not intimately acquainted with the country.

*Estimates.*—The estimates of the lines of which detailed surveys have been made are submitted with considerable confidence, as they are based on actual measurement of work; but in all other cases the figures are only approximations, made by comparison with other railways. The following are the estimates of the various lines with which we are immediately concerned:—

				Miles.	£
1. East and West Coast	...	...	...	95	1,505,000
2. Hokitika-Greymouth, completion	...	...	...	24	180,000
3. West Coast and Nelson	...	...	...	154	1,330,000
4. Branch to Westport	...	...	...	27	335,000
5. Tophouse to Blenheim	...	...	...	63	375,000
Totals				363	£3,725,000

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY.

*Area.*—A line has been drawn on the maps showing the boundary of the country affected by the proposed East and West Coast and Nelson Railways and the connection from Tophouse and Blenheim, the latter, as already remarked, being the most important in the several lists given above.