

3. After being almost stationary for a long time, the population of the West Coast has begun to increase through the development of the coal industries.

4. There is a considerable extent of arable land on the West Coast; but the principal resources of the country are timber and minerals. Most of the good land is covered with dense forest, so it cannot be settled rapidly.

5. The forests are of great extent and value, and many of them are favourably situated as regards a market for the timber.

6. The West Coast contains a great variety of minerals; but gold and coal are the only ones as yet found in quantity and worked.

7. Alluvial gold-digging will last for many years, but there is no prospect of new fields. Quartz mining is a permanent industry, capable of considerable extension.

8. The coalfields on the West Coast are of very great extent, and yield first-class coal, and the coal-mining industry is capable of enormous expansion.

9. The East and West Coast Railway will probably yield a revenue of £120,000; but the net return cannot be estimated.

#### CONCLUSION.

In making this report I have endeavoured to give a full description of the proposed railways and the country affected by them, and to show the bearing that the resources of the country have on the prospects of the lines, estimating the future by the past and present. I regret that the report is of unusual length: my excuse is the importance of the subject.

Four maps, a list of papers referring to the railways, and a table of distances are hereto appended.

I have, &c.,  
W. N. BLAIR,  
Assistant Engineer-in-Chief.

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