

There is one point in connection with the scheme which has escaped consideration, and to which I drew the attention of the Mayor of Lower Hutt. The Hutt River Board are reclaiming 260 acres for industrial purposes, and will profit considerably by the suggested railway-extension and the provision of residential areas adjacent to their property, and they should be called upon to contribute in some way. I suggested that they should guarantee interest on any loss, but the Mayor would not consider such a proposition, but voiced the possibility of a cash contribution of, say, £5,000. If this offer was amplified by the offer of all river-metal required for roading free of cost, and the handing-over of portion of the reclamation for railway workshops, &c., the possibilities of the scheme would be well worth consideration.

It must not be forgotten that the sale of Crown lands in the Wilford, Pitt, and Hall-Jones Settlements would receive a considerable impetus, while the soldiers' settlement at Waddington would benefit appreciably.

The gradual development of the valley, as far as Haywards on present lines will result in continual calls on the State for grants-in-aid to construct bridges and roads giving access to different stations across the Hutt River. The proposed line, and its subsequent extension as necessity arises, will silence these calls, and concentrate a population of sixteen thousand additional people along a four-mile branch railway, besides opening up a manufacturing area of 260 acres. This from a railway point of view is infinitely more profitable than dealing with the same number of people scattered over a distance of twenty miles. It seems to me the scheme is a practicable and sound one commercially, and, although it involves a problematical small initial loss, it must, if adopted, result ultimately in very material public benefit to the community.

F. N. MARTIN, District Valuer.

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