

PART IV.—WESTPORT—INANGAHUA.

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Total estimated cost	977,000
Expenditure to 30th June, 1931	527,000
Estimated expenditure to complete	450,000
Total cost equals £37,577 per mile.	

The Westport–Inangahua line was originally projected about 1907. In April, 1912, the section from Westport to Te Kuha (5 miles 61 chains) was opened for traffic and has since been worked as a goods line, with an occasional excursion passenger-train. In July, 1927, the line from Te Kuha to Cascade, a further distance of 2 miles 65 chains, was brought into use by the Public Works Department for the conveyance of coal from the Cascade Mine, and this section of the line is still being worked by that Department. The distance from Cascade to Inangahua is 17 miles, making a total distance from Westport to Inangahua of 26 miles.

Other distances that are relevant to a consideration of this line are the following :—

	By Rail if constructed.	By Road as at present.	
	Miles.	Miles.	
Westport–Greymouth	92	69	Coast road.
	..	96	Road to Reefton and rail Reefton–Greymouth.
Westport–Christchurch via Greymouth	214	Coast road to Greymouth and rail Greymouth to Christchurch.
Westport–Christchurch via Stillwater	220
Westport–Nelson	139	150	..

The Board, after going over the route of the Kawatiri–Inangahua Railway, arrived at Inangahua on the afternoon of Thursday, the 13th August, and were there met by representatives from Westport, including the Deputy Mayor of Westport. The Board proceeded over the route of the railway, arriving at Westport the same evening. Next morning, after inspecting part of the district in the vicinity of Westport, the Board returned to Inangahua, where it joined the train for Greymouth.

The position in regard to passenger traffic is problematical. Practically the only possibility of a reasonable assurance that the railways would secure the bulk of the passenger traffic to and from the direction of Nelson would be if the line were completed between Kawatiri and Inangahua. Assuming that this is not done the passenger traffic between the West Coast and Nelson would still require to be catered for by service cars, at any rate between Nelson and Inangahua Junction, and it cannot be foreseen whether the service cars, having once secured the passengers, would not cover the whole distance to Westport. The volume of the passenger traffic that would come to the railway is uncertain. The traffic for Greymouth and Christchurch is at present catered for by service cars, which run between Westport and Greymouth via the coastal road which has been recently opened. As will be seen from the figures set out above, the distance by rail over the new line from Westport to Greymouth would be 92 miles, while the distance by the coastal road would be only 69 miles. The road has also some scenic attractions, and the Board is of opinion that the great bulk of the passenger traffic between Westport and Greymouth would continue to go by the road route.

With regard to passenger traffic between Westport and places beyond Greymouth, particularly Canterbury, the present position is that passengers travel by service cars over the coastal road to Greymouth, where they join the train. The probability is that passengers would continue to use this route. The service permits them to leave Westport in the morning in time to join the express train for Christchurch at Greymouth, and, similarly, on the return journey the cars wait at Greymouth until the arrival of the train from Christchurch, proceeding thence to Westport, which