

Mataura, Winton and Kingston Railways, all of which will be completed nearly at the same time; and the whole of this traffic will be diverted when the middle section of the trunk line from Clutha to Mataura is completed.

It is estimated that the amount now paid by passengers and goods along the line of the railway is £7,000 a year; to which must be added £3,000 for the expected increase in the business of the Woodlands Meat Preserving Works, making £10,000; and it may be safely assumed that the total amount paid for carriage will increase rather than decrease with the cheapness and facilities which the railway will offer. I think it a very moderate estimate to assume that the local traffic will rise to at least £12,300 a year, at which I estimate the working expenses, including removal of permanent way and rolling stock. The through traffic between Invercargill and Dunedin, and Lake Wakatipu and Dunedin, would cover renewal of bridges and other timber work, and probably leave enough to pay a small dividend. When the middle from Clutha to Mataura is finished, there would be, I have little doubt, sufficient traffic to pay a fair dividend on the whole cost.

The indirect advantages of the railway will be great. The traffic of the Bluff and Invercargill Railway will be largely increased, and a fine agricultural district will be opened up, at a cost very little exceeding what would be required for a macadamized road.

The line passes through a generally favourable country. There is, however, one cutting containing 95,000 cubic yards hauled on an average three-quarters of a mile. The most important structure is the Mataura Bridge, consisting of 10 timber spans of 40 feet, supported on masonry piers and abutments. There are nine other bridges of an aggregate length of 567 feet.

The rails will be 40 lbs. to the yard on cross sleepers, bedded in ballast.

The gradients and curves are comparatively easy.

I have, &c.,

JOHN CARRUTHERS,
Engineer-in-Chief.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

No. 9.

REPORT ON WELLINGTON AND MASTERTON RAILWAY.

MR. CARRUTHERS to the Hon. J. D. ORMOND.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 29th June, 1872.

This line, leaving Wellington, passes by the valley of the Hutt, across the Rimutaka Range, into the valley of the Wairarapa, in which Masterton lies. It is proposed at some future date to extend it to the Manawatu Gorge, where it will join the lines from Napier and Taranaki, and eventually will join the line running southwards from Auckland.

When it is considered that Wellington is the only harbour in the North Island south of Auckland, it is at once apparent how absolutely necessary this line is to the opening up of the country.

At present the whole traffic of the Wairarapa Valley is done by carts and coaches crossing the Rimutaka Range; the cost of cartage being enormous. Under such disadvantages it is out of the question that the country will ever become thickly settled.

The sea coast of the Province of Wellington on the east is without harbours fit even for small vessels, and the good road is, besides, cut off by high ranges from the coast. The only outlet available, therefore, for the part of the Province to the east of the Rimutaka Ranges is by way of Wellington.

The west coast of Wellington and the Provinces of Hawke's Bay and Taranaki are scarcely less dependent on Wellington, as they possess only one or two small harbours.

It will thus be seen that the future prosperity of these Provinces almost depends on the Railway, and that there will be no competition to speak of by sea carriage or otherwise which will tend to detract from the traffic of the railway.

The part of the line at present to be let for contract extends from Wellington to the Upper Hutt. It is very difficult to arrive at a trustworthy estimate of the amount of traffic which it will command.

I think the following is a safe estimate:—

Timber and wool from the Wairarapa, 12,000 tons, at 5s.	...	...	£3000
Passengers to Hutt, 20 per diem, 7000, at 1s. 6d.	...	...	525
Passengers to Upper Hutt and Wairarapa, 15,000, at 4s.	...	...	300
Firewood from Hutt, 5,000 chords at 2s. 6d.	...	...	625
Merchandise, 4,000 tons at 5s.	...	...	1,000
Mails, parcels, &c.	...	...	250
Total	...	...	£5,700

There are at present two coaches daily to the Hutt, and no less than eight large drays engaged in carrying merchandise, besides the timber waggons are in constant employment on the Hutt Road.

The tolls of the Kaiwarrawarra toll-gate are let at present for £2,000 per annum, so that I think above estimate may be considered under, rather than over, the mark. I estimate the working expenses, including renewals, at £5,500 per annum.

The above estimate of revenue applies only to the line in its unfinished state terminating at the Upper Hutt, and I have no doubt will be largely increased when the line over the Rimutaka is complete.

The curves and gradients of the line are very favourable.

I have, &c.,

JOHN CARRUTHERS,
Engineer-in-Chief.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works.