

1877.
NEW ZEALAND.

OTAGO MAIN CENTRAL RAILWAY COMMITTEE,
(REPORT OF THE, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.)

Presented 7th September, 1877, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 23RD DAY OF AUGUST, 1877.

Ordered, That a Select Committee, consisting of the Hon. Mr. Ormond, Mr. Pyke, Mr. De Lautour, Mr. Macandrew, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Carrington, Mr. Bunuy, Mr. Larnach, and the Mover—three to be a quorum—be appointed to consider the necessity of constructing a main central railway through the Otago Provincial District to Clyde and Cromwell. The Committee to have power to call for persons and papers, and to report within ten days.—(*Mr. Stout.*)

THURSDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1877.

Ordered, That the name of the Hon. Mr. McLean be added to the Central Otago Railway Committee.—(*Mr. Macandrew.*)

FRIDAY, THE 31ST DAY OF AUGUST, 1877.

Ordered, That the time for bringing up the report of the Otago Main Central Railway Committee be extended for seven days.—(*Mr. Pyke.*)

TUESDAY, THE 4TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1877.

Ordered, That the petition of 3,150 residents of the Provincial District of Otago be referred to the Otago Main Central Railway Committee.—(*Mr. Kelly.*)

REPORT.

THE Select Committee appointed to consider the necessity of constructing a Main Central Railway through the Otago Provincial District to Clyde and Cromwell have carefully inquired into the merits of the following proposed lines of railroad, with regard both to the cost of their construction and the advantages which they respectively offer for settlement and traffic:—

- Route No. 1.—Kingston to Cromwell *via* Frankton.
- Route No. 2.—Waipahi to Cromwell *via* Teviot.
- Route No. 3.—Lawrence to Cromwell *via* Clutha Valley.
- Route No. 4.—North Taieri to Cromwell *via* Strath Taieri.
- Route No. 5.—Palmerston to Cromwell *via* Macrae's.
- Route No. 6.—Palmerston to Cromwell *via* Shag Valley.
- Route No. 7.—Oamaru to Cromwell *via* Maerewhenua Pass.

Route No. 1.—With regard to the first line, your Committee find that it would not open any country available for settlement, nor would it be suitable for the traffic of the interior.

Route No. 2 appears to be a desirable line so far as Tapanui, but, for reasons which appear in the remarks upon Route No. 3, your Committee cannot recommend that it be carried further.

Route No. 3.—The line from Lawrence to Cromwell would be the best if the question of communication only were under consideration, but it would pass through a rocky gorge for the greater part, and would open only a small area of Crown lands for occupancy and settlement.

Route No. 4.—The line *via* Strath Taieri commands the largest quantity of Crown lands available for settlement, presents the fewest engineering difficulties, passes entirely through Crown lands, and has the great advantage of being the nearest and most direct line from the interior to Dunedin. It has been shown in evidence that this line will directly open 1,200,000 acres of Crown lands, of which it has been variously estimated that from 400,000 to 500,000 acres are immediately adapted for agriculture. In addition it affords railway communication for 1,065,000 acres of land above Cromwell, which is the natural outlet for all the traffic of the basin of the Clutha River and the Hawea and Wanaka Lakes. This line possesses the further recommendation of having been selected by Mr. Blair, the District