

1877.
NEW ZEALAND.

HOKITIKA AND GREYMOUTH PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

(FURTHER REPORT OF, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE).

REPORT

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A LINE OF RAILWAY TO CONNECT THE TOWN OF HOKITIKA WITH GREYMOUTH.

THE Committee appointed to inquire into and report upon the proposed construction of the Hokitika and Greymouth Railway have the honor to report that they have carefully considered the matter, and have taken evidence thereon.

Mr. Carruthers, Engineer-in-Chief, in his evidence informed the Committee that the total cost of the construction of the line, including rolling-stock, construction of stations, &c., would be £221,000, and that the plans and specifications were so complete that the work, if sanctioned, could be proceeded with at once, and that the surveys had been completed long since.

The District Engineer of Westland, Mr. O'Connor, gave evidence before the Committee and produced plans of the proposed line. He showed that there was no engineering difficulty in connection with the construction of the line, that the gradients would be easy, and that it would connect with the Brunner line.

The line proposed to be constructed would be 23 miles 51 chains in length, and the land to be purchased would be very small in extent.

Attached to this report is the evidence of the Engineer-in-Chief, and the District Engineer of Westland, together with the estimate of the probable amount of traffic weekly, and of the yearly working expenses.

There is reason to believe that the estimate of the traffic is put below what may reasonably be anticipated, and the Committee attach considerable weight to the fact that a branch line to Kumara, five miles in length, would very largely increase the receipts.

The Towns of Hokitika and Greymouth are places of very considerable commercial importance; the Customs duties collected at the two ports during the year 1876 being no less a sum than £70,941, or an increase on the previous year of £3,697. The means of communication between the two towns at the present time are most tedious and uncertain, and thus the ordinary facilities offered to trade in many parts of the colony are absent, placing Westland at a very great disadvantage.

In the event of the railway being constructed, there would be a very extensive traffic in coal, which in itself would yield a very considerable profit in the working of the line, and the timber suitable for export being practically inexhaustible, immense quantities would be conveyed to the two ports. The passenger traffic would amount to no small item, and this, in all probability, would steadily increase. It may be fairly anticipated that the ordinary goods traffic would be very considerable, more especially when it is borne in mind that merchants' stocks vary considerably at times in the two towns proposed to be connected by the railway.

The construction of the line would, to a very great extent, tend to promote settlement, and benefit thereby a large extent of country, while there can be no doubt but that the general prosperity of Westland would be very materially advanced.

The Committee therefore recommend the construction of the line, and trust that the Government will see their way to cause the work to be undertaken.

EDMUND BARFF,
Chairman.

27th November, 1877.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

THURSDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 1877.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

PRESENT:

Mr. Barff in the chair.

Sir R. Douglas, Bart.,
Hon. Mr. Gisborne,

Mr. Joyce,
Mr. Woolcock.

Order of reference, dated 6th November, read.

1.—I. 14A.