

are meanwhile taking place. The road will shortly be surveyed onwards towards Awarua Bay, and additional sections laid off alongside. At present the road, as a whole, may be regarded as formed but unmetalled.

JOHN SPENCE,
Chief Surveyor.

PROPOSED TRACK FROM CANTERBURY TO WESTLAND VIA MATHIAS PASS.

The CHIEF SURVEYOR to the SURVEYOR-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Chief Surveyor's Office, Hokitika, 10th February, 1881.

Referring to your memorandum, numbered and dated S.G. 3838-3, 22nd December, 1880, I have the honor to inform you that I have, during my stay in Canterbury, embraced the opportunity of calling upon Mr. Phillips, of Rockwood Station, and upon Messrs. Richards and Collins, then in the employ of Mr. Gerard, at Snowdon Station, for the purpose of getting information regarding Mathias Pass. Mr. Phillips never crossed the dividing range, and Messrs. Richards and Collins, after crossing the pass, followed the Hokitika River into Westland, which is probably the worst route by which an attempt of the descent into the low country could be made.

After collecting all the information I could, and getting a general description of the difficulties to be encountered along the route the above-named gentlemen travelled, (it took them five days to work their way down the Hokitika River,) I started for Hokitika *via* Mathias Pass. I left Mr. Roberts's camp on the morning of Monday, 24th January, camped near point marked P (see plan attached to report) on night of 24th, in north branch of Frew's Creek on 25th, one mile north of point F on 26th, at junction of Hokitika and Pass Rivers on 27th, a mile and a half south of point A on the 28th, and reached Hokitika on the evening of the 29th January. The weather was good, but the rivers were high, as they generally are, owing to the melting of snow during the hot summer months, and the fording consequently was difficult. The "working around," and over some of the precipitous bluffs also, which involved ascents of from 300 to 500 feet, gave us much trouble. Apart from these drawbacks, however, and the special treat of having had to live on a small piece of scone for nearly three days, while carrying heavy swags and traversing ground so difficult and steep that on several occasions first the swags and then the men had to be lifted up or let down from ledge to ledge, the whole passed off well. Our involuntary fasting was brought about by the stupidity of a man, who, in accordance with my instructions, was despatched from Hokitika to deposit the necessary supply of provisions at the east side of Pass River, near junction of Frew's Creek. On arrival at Pass River it appears he found the river too high, and, therefore, as we learned after arrival at Hokitika, contented himself with leaving the provisions on the west side of Pass River. When, on our descent to mouth of Frew's Creek, we found no provisions (our last bite of meat had been consumed that morning), nor any indication of the relief-supplies having been left on the opposite side, we did not attempt crossing the Pass River, but worked our way down on east side as best we could under the hungry circumstances.

Enclosed herewith please receive report on the practicability of constructing Mathias Pass Road; plan and section are attached to report.

I have, &c.,

GERARD MUELLER,
Chief Surveyor.

J. McKerrow, Esq., Surveyor-General,
Wellington.

Enclosure.

REPORT by Mr. G. MUELLER, Chief Surveyor, on proposed Stock-road connecting Westland with Canterbury *via* Mathias Pass.

General Description.

THE road will commence at the south end of Koiterangi Road, will follow the banks of Hokitika and Pass Rivers; thence north of Frew's Creek along the southern slopes of Mount Meta Range to Mathias Pass; thence down the eastern slopes of Agassiz Range into Mathias River, and across the downs on east side of that river to the west end of the main Rakaia Valley Road.

On the Westland side of the Mathias Pass the road will traverse forest lands, and on the Canterbury side scattered light scrub for a few miles, and the rest grass country.

The total length of this connection (Koiterangi Road with Rakaia Valley Road) is 39½ miles; but 7½ of these require no construction whatever, while half of the remainder—namely, 16 miles—require to be formed only, while the other 16 (possibly 12 miles only) must be metalled in the usual way.

The road-construction along this line will vary with the nature of the ground to be traversed. Particulars are, as far as this is possible, given under next heading, and the estimates attached to the report are framed on these bases, *i.e.*, that the road proposed to be constructed is to be a stock-road, and that no expenditure beyond that required for making it a fair stock-road is to be incurred.