

BEST ROUTE.

Taking into consideration the merits as enumerated above, I have no hesitation in stating that the Ngairu route is the best, and, further, that the country passed through is good enough to support a line, especially with the deviations mentioned at each end, without taking into consideration the question of its being a means of communication between Auckland and Wellington and Taranaki; in fact, a railway-line will be almost a necessity for the future prosperity of the country, owing to the long distances which most of it is from a market, and the difficulty of maintaining roads in proper condition to allow of carting all the year round, due to the lack of suitable materials for metalling them.

ROADWORKS.

In conclusion, I wish to draw attention, as was done in 1889, to the necessity of locating the main road through the Tangarakau Gorge and approaches, so as not to interfere with the railway-line, as in places where the road is completed no attention seems to have been paid to the necessity of avoiding the railway-line, which will cause useless expenditure on road-deviations when railway-construction is undertaken.

APPENDIX.

An appendix is attached hereto giving some remarks on the length and cost of the Central line, with reasons for its adoption, as the means of communication between Auckland and Wellington.

I have, &c.,

R. W. HOLMES,
Resident Engineer.

The Engineer-in-Chief, Wellington.

APPENDIX.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 31st July, 1899.

I have the honour to draw your attention to the following remarks on the

CENTRAL LINE.

Distances.

Distance between termini of parts opened for traffic is $140\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Distance between termini of parts under construction is $113\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

Length under construction at present time is twenty-seven miles. Of this distance eleven miles of formation at southern end are completed, with exception of Makohine Viaduct.

The distance between Marton and Te Awamutu is 210 miles. These places are the termini of what is generally known as the Central route. Of this distance $69\frac{1}{2}$ miles have been completed for traffic and opened.

Distance between Auckland and Wellington is $426\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Cost.

An estimated expenditure of £1,211,665 is required to complete this line, an average of £8,610 per mile. This estimate, as per details attached, is based upon actual quantities for eighty-seven miles of the $140\frac{1}{2}$ miles; the balance of $53\frac{1}{2}$ miles is based upon comparisons with the former part, so that it is correct within narrow limits.

Reasons for Adoption.

The following are the chief reasons for constructing this line as the means of communication between Wellington and Auckland instead of *via* Taranaki:—

1. It is the shortest distance by fifty-one miles.
2. It avoids the heavy grades of opened line from Turakina to Waitotara, and the lesser grades between the latter place and Hawera.
3. There are less rises and falls by 1,128 ft.
4. The journey between Wellington and Auckland can be performed in a very much shorter time, because: (a) The distance is shorter; (b) there are fewer rises to haul trains up; (c) the line is a better running one, as the grades and curves are easier, thus allowing of greater speed.
5. The grades are flatter over the greater part of the distance.
6. It passes nearly through centre of North Island, thus opening up the interior, which can only be effectively accomplished by a railway.
7. That the country is excellent on both sides of line up to the 61st mile from Marton, and is capable of supporting a line without regard to through traffic. That the country is good to the westward of line for remainder of distance. That the country to the eastward, although inferior, is capable of providing considerable freight, such as wool, stock, &c.
8. That it is the only means of tapping the large forests in the Waimarino Block.
9. That the royalty derivable from these forests, if properly conserved, will pay for the line.
10. That these forests will be a perpetual source of revenue.
11. That it will enable the country between these forests and the Wanganui River to be suitably settled, which will otherwise remain to a great extent unproductive.
12. That it will enable the San Francisco mails to reach Wellington and the South Island in the shortest possible time.