

When the connection between Rotorua and the East Coast Railway is made this route will form, with that connection, a direct line of railway from Taupo to the harbours of the Bay of Plenty, whence timber and farm-products may be exported, while the cost of conveyance by railway will be a minimum, as the line will fall all the way from Taupo to the sea, and avoid the climb to Oruanui on the way to Putaruru, and also Mamaku, between Rotorua and Putaruru. The distance by railway from Taupo to the Thames seaport *via* Oruanui and Putaruru is 149 miles; from Taupo to the Thames seaport *via* Rotorua is 170 miles; from Taupo to Tauranga *via* Rotorua is 103 miles. There thus appears to be a distinct saving in railway freight as between Taupo and Tauranga, and between Taupo and Thames, the next nearer shipping port due to the shorter distance. With the exception of the thermal region in the vicinity of Waio-tapu, the land along the route appears to be better than that along either of the other routes, as is evidenced by the greater extent of cultivated land to be seen.

*Summary.*

| Name.                                       |     |     | Length. |  | Cost.   |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------|--|---------|
|                                             |     |     | Miles.  |  | £       |
| 1. Putaruru to Taupo <i>via</i> Oruanui     | ... | ... | 67      |  | 451,400 |
| 2. Putaruru to Taupo <i>via</i> Atiamuri    | ... | ... | 77      |  | 512,400 |
| 3. Rotorua to Taupo <i>via</i> Orakeikorako | ... | ... | 56      |  | 448,000 |
| 4. Rotorua to Taupo <i>via</i> Waio-tapu    | ... | ... | 56      |  | 392,000 |

From the above remarks it would appear that, whether the question be viewed from the standpoint of cheapness of construction, suitability of the line when constructed, future working-expenses, probable traffic and therefore revenue, or from the point of view of satisfaction to the travelling public, and the greatest good for the greatest number, the route from Rotorua *via* Waio-tapu is unquestionably the one to be adopted.

In conclusion, the question of the best route to connect Taupo with the existing working railway system having been discussed, the desirability of incorporating the Taupo Totara Timber Company's line in the railway system of the Dominion for the purpose of serving the country along its route appears a question on which the Railway Department should be consulted.

I wish to place on record my appreciation of the courtesy shown by the Taupo Totara Timber Company's officials in facilitating my inspection of the company's line, and in supplying me with all the information in connection therewith at their disposal.

4. Have you anything to add to your report?—I do not think so. I have not thought of anything since.

5. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In making your report you do not seem to have contemplated the use of the company's line as a light line?—As I said at the end of my report, I would prefer to leave that question to the Railway Department to give evidence upon, as that is the Department which has more to do with a light line after it is constructed than we have. They are more acquainted with its possibilities for traffic.

6. In the course of evidence a statement was made that to fit the light line for passengers it would require re-equipment with specially suitable rolling-stock: can you give the Committee any guidance on that point?—To work the line as an independent line for passenger traffic it would require very little improvement. As far as the rolling-stock goes, I think the company's stock would suit, but they have no suitable passenger carriages. They would have to be provided. I would like it to be clearly understood that the Government rolling-stock could not travel over the line.

7. The evidence taken gives the impression that it would be unsafe or impossible to get round the sharp curves at the speed contemplated for passengers—say, twenty miles an hour—without special rolling-stock, such as is in use on the light lines in America?—I do not think it would be possible to work the line at twenty miles an hour round the very sharp curves.

8. Even with special rolling-stock?—No.

9. Could you give the Committee any idea as to the desirability or otherwise of constructing a light line over such country?—I do not see myself why light lines should not be constructed over certain parts of the country, providing the public would consent to differential rating. It would be hardly possible to work them at the same rate as the general railway system, owing to the extra terminal charges for transferring goods from the lighter rolling-stock to the heavier.

10. Would the difficulty you now suggest as to transfer not be got over if light lines were constructed in certain parts of the Dominion and worked separately from the general system—say, for instance, as Kawakawa—not connected with the general system at all?—In the case of Kawakawa it will be connected with the general system, and the existing traffic on part of that line now requires a heavier construction on the southern end of the line.

11. Supposing a tract of country requires railway communication, but is not likely in the future to be connected with the main system of railways: would you advise in such a case as that that a light line should be tried rather than the present expensive system of building a heavy line?—There are few cases where I should be inclined to advocate a lighter form of construction. It is a very difficult question, because there are many points that govern it.

12. You mentioned the probable traffic on the railway from Rotorua to Taupo from the timber newly grown on the Government plantations?—Yes.

13. Is any of that timber fit now?—Not yet.

14. Can you give us any idea as to when you expect it to come into a fit condition?—I should say the larch-trees they are planting will be available for railway-sleepers within the next thirty years.

15. Two of the lines you have described will touch at Orakei?—Yes.