

Whatever lay-out may ultimately be decided upon, the work should only be carried out as traffic grows, care, as a matter of course, being taken that any addition made from time to time conforms to the complete scheme. As in the proposals for meeting traffic requirements at other places, the changes brought about by dividing passenger from goods traffic as far as possible will need study in conjunction with the operating staff so that the latter may have at their disposal sidings and connections best suited to the direction and volume of traffic at each station. The reduction of grade alone is justification for the Auckland–Westfield deviation line, which is urgent also by reason of traffic increase. The double tracking of the existing line between Westfield and Penrose Junction is also a pressing necessity.

Suggested Rearrangement at Wellington.

At Wellington the deviation-lines on the Tawa Flat and the Hutt Valley should prove financially successful and greatly improve the running of trains. As in the case of Auckland, the lay-out of the station and yard to the extent shown on the plan is not justified by the present traffic, and should be carefully studied with a view of meeting requirements from time to time, any additions being in accordance with the complete scheme. Here again a rearrangement of passenger and goods working may lead to some considerable modification of the scheme. Existing lines and sidings are certainly inadequate and costly to work; a considerable enlargement more or less on the lines shown on the plans is badly needed.

Palmerston North Deviation, &c.

Palmerston North deviation and the new station and yards are a necessity of traffic operation to-day. Congestion, with its consequent cost over and above the normal, is evident day by day, and during busier seasons it must obviously be far worse than it is at the time we are writing. It should without doubt be relieved as soon as possible. In this connection we may refer to the Levin and Marton new line, advocated as an alternative to some extent for expenditure at Palmerston North. Even if a direct line be made between Levin and Marton the necessity for a complete realignment and extension at the former place would still obtain. If no railways existed in New Zealand and it were desired to construct a direct line between Wellington and Auckland, it is more than probable that the Levin–Marton route would be chosen, but, unfortunately for the advocates of the new route, the lines centering upon Palmerston North do exist and must so continue, and be provided with train services not only for the district immediately adjacent to Palmerston North, but also as a junction point for traffic east (Hawke's Bay line) to and from south, north, and west, as well as the Wairarapa line to and from the same districts. The route from Levin to Marton does not, apart from bridges, offer any physical or costly difficulties of construction, and the district is a good one from an agricultural point of view, but the fact remains that two railways will have to be maintained and worked when this line is constructed. The time will come, no doubt, when a doubling of Main Trunk lines will have to be considered seriously, and then it will probably be found desirable to relieve the Palmerston North route by an alternative north and south line between Levin and Marton.

Christchurch and Lyttelton Tunnel Works.

The Government, having committed itself to the doubling of the Lyttelton Tunnel, no remark is called for from us, but the proposed site of a new shunting-yard at Woolston appears to us to need further consideration. Such a yard would without doubt deal effectively with traffic to and from Lyttelton; it would not however, serve traffic proceeding from north of Christchurch southward, and *vice versa*. When the complete railway system of the South Island becomes an accomplished fact a yard at Woolston would be available for a portion only of the traffic passing through Christchurch, and in our opinion it would be wiser to anticipate future requirements by selecting a site suitable for traffic movement north and south as well as to and from Lyttelton.