

PART I.—WHARANUI-PARNASSUS.

Estimated capital cost—		£	£
Public Works Department ..	2,581,000		
Railways Department — Additional terminal facilities, bridge-strengthening, and signalling and communication systems	176,000*		
			2,757,000
Average cost per mile			36,276
Expenditure to 31st March, 1931			415,239
			Miles.
Mileage—Wharanui to Parnassus			76
Work in hand—			Miles. Miles.
North end			28
South end			15
			— 43
Surveyed and located but not commenced			6
Trial surveys only; not finally located			27
			— 76
Expenditure since 31st March, 1931—			£
April–May			49,500
June–July			50,000
Expenditure to complete—		£	
Public Works Department	2,066,261		
Railways Department*	176,000		
			2,242,261

The members of the Board left Wellington for Picton on the 24th June, being accompanied by the General Manager of Railways, Mr. H. H. Sterling, and the Engineer-in-Chief of the Public Works Department, Mr. F. W. Furkert.

The Board was met at Blenheim by Mr. E. F. Healy, M.P. for Wairau, and by the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Marlborough District.

The Board left Blenheim on the morning of the 25th June, and during that day and the following day was fully occupied in an inspection of the line and of the contiguous country.

The route may be classified into three sections, as follows:—

- (1) Picton to Wharanui (56 miles). (Open line.)
 - (2) Wharanui to Parnassus via Clarence River, Kaikoura, and Conway River (76 miles). (Under construction.)
 - (3) Parnassus to Christchurch (85 miles). (Open line.)
- Total distance, 217 miles, Picton–Christchurch.

At several points suggested by persons well informed as to local conditions the Board made detours alternatively to the coast and inland from the route of the railway-line. By so doing the Board saw typical portions of the country and had the advantage of meeting local residents. In addition, the Board received many written statements, and later received oral statements at Wellington.

CONSTRUCTION COSTS.

Approaching the question from the standpoint of construction costs, the Board finds that the following is the actual position:—

The total expenditure to the 31st March, 1931, was £415,239.

The estimated expenditure from the 31st March, 1931, to complete the line was £2,165,761, to which must be added the cost of additional terminal facilities, bridge-strengthening, and signalling and communication systems, amounting to £176,000, making a total of £2,341,761.

* Capital expenditure by Railways Department does not include £54,000 required to bring the existing lines to main trunk line standard.