

REEFTON LINE.

This line will start from Greymouth; follow the eastern bank of the Grey River; cross the Abaura, at which place a Post and Telegraph Station will be opened; and thence to Reefton. The Grey will again be crossed about three miles eastward of the junction of the Mauhuariti. The estimated length of the line is fifty miles, nearly forty miles being through bush.

The construction, &c., is being carried on under the supervision of Mr. Bird; and it is expected that the line will be completed about August. The station at Reefton will be combined with the Post Office.

COROMANDEL LINE.

When the erection of this line was first contemplated, two routes were said to be available for the carrying of the wires between Grahamstown and Coromandel—one by the ranges, following the present bridle-track, and the other by the sea beach, or in close proximity to it.

On inspection, so far as the actual examination of the country was possible, it was found that the route by the ranges would not only be most difficult, but very expensive. It was therefore determined to examine the beach route, which was found to be the better, not only on account of its being more accessible, but also as being seven miles shorter. The line, as projected, follows the coast, but cuts across any projections where it can be done with advantage.

The line will probably be completed early in July: its estimated length is twenty-eight miles. A site for a Telegraph Station at Kapanga, the terminus of the line, has been kindly placed at the disposal of the Department by Mr. N. Glover, of that place; and a building on the allotment, has been purchased from Mr. Glover, and is being altered to render it convenient as a Post and Telegraph Office.

The examination of the routes in this case was intrusted to Mr. Alfred Sheath, District Inspector, under whose supervision the works are being carried on.

INVERCARGILL TO WINTON.

The wire for this line will be carried on the poles used for the Riverton line, to a point about five miles from Invercargill, where the railway line to Winton crosses; and it will then run alongside the railway to Winton. A tender for the supply and delivery of all-heart of totara poles has been accepted, and it is expected the line will be opened about October. The estimated length of wire is nineteen miles, the new poles extending over fourteen miles.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS.

BLUFF TO BALCLUTHA.

The line from Bluff to Invercargill has not given trouble during the past year. An inspection made during December showed that it would be necessary to re-pole the line between Invercargill and Balclutha. Tenders, to be delivered not later than January, were at once called for; and it was found that between Invercargill and Mataura the cheapest plan would be to supply the poles from Wellington, those needed from Balclutha to Mataura being supplied by contract from Balclutha. The re-poleing has been completed from Invercargill to Otaria; and it is expected that the remainder of the distance will shortly be completed. Only heart of totara poles are being used, and where possible the route of the line will be altered so as to increase its stability.

BALCLUTHA TO WAITAKI.

Between Balclutha and Tokomairi, a few repairs have been made during the year. A severe storm on the 23rd December, did some slight damage to the wires on the ranges near Balclutha.

Between Tokomairi and Dunedin, one hundred and thirty-five new poles have been inserted in place of decayed ones which, when the line was reconstructed, were allowed to remain as good for another year's service.

Dunedin to Waitaki: When the third wire was being run to Oamaru, one hundred and ten new poles were inserted in place of the old round ones first used, which, from their decayed state, and the additional weight of wire they would have to carry, it was not advisable to allow to remain.

Between Oamaru and Waitaki there are fourteen miles of old poles, which were shortened early in 1869; and which it will be advisable, during next summer, to provide for replacing, as, if allowed to remain during another year, they would probably cause serious interruption.

PALMERSTON TO NASEBY.

This line, which was finished in June, sustained considerable damage during August, the wires being broken in several places through the weight of snow that accumulated on them. Otherwise, only ordinary repairs have been required.

TOKOMAIRI TO QUEENSTOWN.

About one hundred new poles have been erected between Tokomairi and Waitahuna, replacing the poles first erected by the Provincial Government of Otago. There still remain about thirty-six miles of the original poles, many of which will have to be replaced within the next eighteen months. This line has suffered very little from casualties.

WAITAKI TO CHRISTCHURCH.

The casualties on this length have been nearly all confined to the neighbourhood of large rivers, across which the wires are carried. The old poles between the Rakaiia and the Rangitata—already lowered once—will probably have to be replaced during the summer.