

of the next two months we may see our way out of it; and if so, another two months will suffice to lay the line as far as it will be of much use until the Waitaki Bridge is completed, and will meet the branch line now in course of construction by the province. The railway from Oamaru to Moeraki is in Messrs. Brogdens' hands. The works are not in as satisfactory a state as they should be, but the Government are not free from blame in the matter. The Engineer over that line had to be removed in November last, and since then the works have been going on more satisfactorily. It is hoped that there will not be much if any delay beyond the contract date for completion.

A further difficulty has arisen near Moeraki, which might have been provided against had more time been taken with the survey; the works completed on half a mile of this portion will have to be abandoned, involving a loss of some two thousand pounds.

From Moeraki to Dunedin, the work which will take the longest time to construct is the tunnel near Port Chalmers through to Blueskin; this is under contract, and is progressing very satisfactorily. Contract plans and sections are prepared from Dunedin to Blueskin Bay, and the work will be immediately put in hand to be completed concurrently with the tunnel. The plans for the remainder between Moeraki and Blueskin Bay are in a forward state, and will be contracted for during this year. A further extension of the Port Chalmers Railway Jetty is contemplated during this year, to provide for the increase of traffic on the Dunedin and Clutha and Dunedin and Moeraki Railways.

The Dunedin and Clutha Railway has been recently opened to Green Island, about six miles. The works are progressing satisfactorily on the rest of the line, and with a view of expediting its completion the Government have offered Messrs. Brogden a bonus of £800 per month for every month they save in the completion of the line previously to 1st September next year.

The Tokomairiro and Lawrence Railway is all under contract, and the date for completion of the formation is 1st of next June. The line ought to be finished by 1st September, 1875, but the whole of this work depends on the completion of the Glenore Tunnel.

From Clutha to Mataura, the only work actually in hand is the large bridge over the Clutha River; but the contract plans are ready for the greater portion of the line, and it is intended to call for tenders for the section between Mataura and Clinton immediately, and the remainder as soon after as practicable.

Between Mataura and Invercargill, about 12 miles have been opened during the past year for traffic, and the remainder of the line is progressing very well, although not so forward as it should be. There has been some delay occasioned by a slip in the heavy cutting on this line, but I am assured that it will not take much beyond the contract time for completion.

From Winton to Kingston the contractor for the first section is not so far advanced as he ought to be with his work, owing to a delay for which he was not accountable. His contract time does not expire till 9th of next month, but it is not possible for him to have his work completed by that date. Every effort is being made to force him on with the construction. The next section of 28 miles is just let, and the remainder will be let as soon as the Government see their way to procure the material. Should the same difficulties which are said now to exist in the way of getting sleepers continue, it is not likely that the cost of this line can be kept within the appropriation. The Land Board wish, no doubt, to conserve the forests in the neighbourhood of the railway; but the Engineer, in estimating the cost of line, took it for granted that no restrictions would be put upon the free cutting of sleepers on Crown lands for this and all other railways.

RAILWAYS—SUMMARY.

To summarize the Railways now authorized,—

Auckland	...	...	166 miles 36 chains	Appropriation	...	£934,500
Taranaki	...	...	18 " 13 "	"	...	110,500
Hawke's Bay	...	...	45 " 25 "	"	...	220,000
Wellington	...	...	133 "	"	...	644,000