

deviation of the Clutha and Mataura line of railway. You stated in reply that Mr. Brunton should be instructed to go over the proposed deviation, and to survey the line by the proposed new route, should it appear to him to be the better of the two. About six months ago Mr. Brunton surveyed the line accurately for tender. I understand he instructed the chief of his staff to examine the route of which the flying survey had been made, and also the route recommended by myself and others, and to survey permanently the route which he considered preferable. At all events that officer surveyed the route recommended by myself. I heard at the time that he did so chiefly on the ground that the route by the Waitepeka presented fewer engineering difficulties than the route by the Four-Mile Creek, of which a flying survey had been taken. On my return from Wellington I received a letter from Mr. Brunton stating that he would not recommend the route by Waitepeka.

He advances three objections to this route. The first is that it is about three-quarters of a mile longer than the route by the Four-Mile.

I was agreeably surprised to hear that the extra length of the Waitepeka route was so small. The short distance of three-quarters of a mile extra is a matter of little consequence, considering the immense advantage which the railway, if it goes by Waitepeka, will be to the settlers of that district, and also to the adjacent districts of Warepa, Puerua, and South Clutha, and considering the increased traffic of the railway if it goes by that route. The other two objections raised by Mr. Brunton are, that the Waitepeka route will cost £12,500 extra in earthworks, and that the gradients will be steeper. Now as only a flying survey was made of the route by the Four-Mile Creek, I do not think that the data on which Mr. Brunton makes his calculations can be very reliable. Those who are best acquainted with the line of the two routes are of opinion that the one by Waitepeka will entail less cutting and have an easier gradient than the one by the Four-Mile. It is true that the Waitepeka line would require one large cutting, and this I understand is the chief objection with Mr. Brunton to taking the line by Waitepeka; but, this cutting once made, no other would be necessary all the way to Balclutha, the valley of the Waitepeka, from the point where the railway would strike it, being level land.

The valley of the Four-Mile, on the contrary, is very zig-zag, and the ridges come down to the side of the creek, necessitating side cuttings for a large portion of the course of the railway. I may mention that a memorial addressed to you is on its way to Wellington, in which the arguments in favour of the route by Waitepeka are clearly set forth; and, as the memorial is largely and influentially signed, I hope you will give the matter your serious consideration. Unless the railway goes by the Waitepeka, the large and thickly settled and well-cultivated districts of Warepa, Waitepeka, Puerua, and South Clutha will be very much shut out from the advantages of railway communication. The settlers who are now nearest to the line, if it goes by the Four-Mile, will have an extra six miles of carriage, and in consequence of this a considerable portion of the traffic of the district will go by sea as at present, very much to the injury of the railway in a financial point of view.

A meeting of the settlers interested was held at Waitepeka last Wednesday. Various resolutions were proposed, amongst others a resolution naming a number of gentlemen as a deputation to wait on his Honor the Superintendent that they might explain the whole matter to him, with the view of his bringing it before the Colonial Government in his official capacity. The deputation waited on his Honor to-day. He was pleased to express the opinion that the railway ought unquestionably to go by Waitepeka, and that he would make a recommendation to this effect to the Government.

I am sorry for troubling you at such length on this matter. The importance of the subject is my excuse. I may state that this deviation will not be of any advantage to myself personally, as I do not reside in either of the districts specially interested. I support the route by the Waitepeka entirely on public grounds.

Hon. E. Richardson, Minister for Public Works,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JAMES W. THOMSON.

No. 4.

His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Otago, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Province of Otago, New Zealand,

Superintendent's Office, Dunedin, 29th September, 1874.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acquaint you that I have been waited upon by a numerous and influential deputation on behalf of settlers in the Clutha district, relative to the line of that part of the Southern Trunk Railway between Balclutha and Clinton. It appears that by the original survey it was intended to take the railway by Waitepeka Valley. Subsequently it has been proposed to take it by way of the Four-Mile Creek (which route is now being surveyed). If this latter proposal is adhered to the bulk of the settlers in the district will be several miles further from the railway than if the first-named route is adopted.

In the public interest, I venture to hope that the Government will reconsider this matter, and will adhere to the route originally laid off, the advantages of which as compared with the other are so manifest to those who know the locality, that it would be "penny-wise and pound-foolish" to adopt the one instead of the other, even if by so doing a saving of a few thousand pounds could be effected.

It seems to me that it can make very little difference as regards the actual length of the main line whether the one route or the other is chosen, while, by adhering to the original survey, the railway will be brought considerably nearer to the great bulk of the settlers for whose benefit it is intended, most of whom are extensive growers of grain and other produce, which will go to feed the railway.

I have, &c.,

J. MACANDREW,
Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.