

and the fullest local information have been obtained, for to these causes is to be attributed the very large additional cost of the works.

The landslips have caused works to be executed costing £15,000 beyond what was estimated. The bridge over the Grey at the Gorge was intended to have been a simple wire tramway; but it is now, owing to the agreement with the Province of Nelson to take the coal direct from the mines to Greymouth in the railway trucks, being built as a suspension bridge, at a cost of £5,500 higher than the original estimate. There is a large additional amount of rolling stock provided for this line beyond that at first proposed, and the cost of transshipment of all the permanent-way materials and rolling stock has been exceptionally heavy; these two items amounting to £13,000.

The cost of land has also been £3,000 more than it was estimated at.

These items bring up the total cost of the line to £121,400; but out of this there is an expenditure of £20,812 for wharf accommodation.

Of the railways in Canterbury, there is still unfinished northwards the portion between the Ashley township and the North Kowai at Amberley.

The delay here has arisen from the extreme difficulty of getting sleepers, the whole having been contracted for, so far back as October 1873, to be shipped from the North of Auckland. The contractors there have signally failed, and the sleepers are being procured locally, but still very slowly. This line will, I hope, be open by the end of September, and will be completed within the estimate.

On the main line from the Selwyn to Ashburton River, after providing for a very large additional amount of rolling stock and ample station accommodation, there will be a saving on the appropriations of £17,419.

Between the Ashburton and Timaru the line will be completed within the appropriation; it is now open to the North Rangitata. In a few days it will be open to the south bank of the Rangitata by means of a temporary bridge over the river, built at the joint expense of the General and Provincial Governments and the railway contractors. Between the south bank of the Rangitata and Temuka the line is now being rapidly completed, although, owing to the failure of one of the contractors, much delay has taken place. From Temuka to Young's Creek the line is nearly completed, and from Young's Creek to Timaru it is ready for opening.

From Timaru southwards to the Waitaki the whole is under contract. The date of completion of the contracts now let is April 1876, but there will then remain 18 miles of plate-laying to be done between the Hook and the Waitaki Rivers.

The plans and specifications are ready for the Waimate branch, towards the cost of which the Canterbury Province has appropriated £5,000. It will be put in hand so as to have it ready for the plate-laying as soon as the main line is completed to the junction.

With regard to the branch lines in Canterbury during the past year, the whole of them have been opened for traffic, with the exception of the White Cliffs line and that from Kaiapoi to Eyreton. These are nearly finished. There is an additional expenditure of £16,000 on them, without the Waimate branch. This latter will cost £19,000, and Government will ask for a vote for its completion.

The Waitaki Bridge is very nearly completed, but it will require a further vote of £1,600, principally caused by the very high rates which have been paid for transshipment from Port Chalmers. The work has been very faithfully performed. The fatal accident which occurred to one of the contractors, who fell off the bridge and was drowned early in the year, and the many difficulties which have occurred, fully account for any little delay beyond the contract time which may elapse before the bridge is ready for opening. This bridge will have cost £76,600.

In the Province of Otago, the line from Waitaki to Oamaru is nearly finished, and, when the Waitaki Bridge is completed, will be ready to open from the station now in course of construction on the north side of the river to Oamaru. From Oamaru to Moeraki, the works are being carried on under Messrs. John Brogden and Sons. The works on the deviation alluded to last year at Moeraki have been delayed awaiting the arrival of the necessary timber from Western Australia. This