

As regards the North of Auckland it will be seen by these proposals that if the Kaukapakapa Station can be advantageously selected, railway communication for a distance of 40 miles will connect that city with the great Kaipara estuary, at a point accessible to vessels of ordinary tonnage. The short line from Wangarei to Kamo, opening up, as it will do, the important mineral and agricultural resources of that district, will come in as a portion of the Main North Line, which will, when completed, connect Auckland with the Bay of Islands.

MIDDLE ISLAND RAILWAYS.

Now, as to the Middle Island. The works we propose for the future are—

	Miles.	£
Otago Central—Dunedin to Albert Town,		
Lake Wanaka,	160	1,100,000
Amberley to Brunnerton,	110	950,000
Greymouth to Hokitika,	26	220,000
Canterbury—Interior Main Line—Oxford to		
Temuka,	85	380,000
South Ashburton to Ashburton Forks,	20	55,000
Albury Extension,	20	110,000
Tapanui Extension to Heriot Burn,	10	40,000
Fortrose to Edendale,	26	110,000
Otautau to Nightcaps,	16	75,000
Clutha to Catlin's River,	18	95,000
Waimea to Switzers,	15	70,000
Lumsden to Mararoa,	35	180,000
Shag Valley Branch Line,	9	35,000
Tapanui to Heriot Burn,	10½	40,000
Waireka Branch to Livingston,	16	105,000

Making a total length of proposed Rail- } 576½ miles, at a total cost of £3,565,000
ways for the Middle Island of ... }

Adding to this an amount of £1,087,000, which is the estimated cost of completing and putting into working order the lines already authorized and opened for traffic in the Middle Island, we shall have a total of £4,652,000 for that Island.

As regards the Otago Central, honorable members will recollect that this House last session, both by resolution and by Act, affirmed that 100 miles of this line through Strath-Taieri to Clyde should be proceeded with; and the House also passed a resolution, in compliance with which 396,000 acres of Crown lands have been reserved from sale, with the view of devoting the proceeds, when they are sold, to the construction of this portion of line. It is now proposed to extend the line from Clyde to Lake Wanaka, a distance of 60 miles, for some 50 miles of which the country is as level as a bowling-green; the whole of it being in the hands of the Crown and available for settlement. My belief is, that no other of the lines now proposed will promote settlement and increase the productive power of the colony to the same extent as the Otago Central; and I venture to predict that many years will not pass without this line being extended to Hokitika *via* the Haast Pass. The length of that extension from Albert Town, the now-contemplated termination of the line, is only 190 miles; and the highest point of the range to be crossed is only 1,700 feet, as against 3,000 feet in the next line we propose to undertake,—that namely, from Amberley to Brunnerton, a distance of 110 miles.

Although it does not appear that this Amberley-Brunnerton line, in proportion to its length and cost of construction, will open up a very large extent of country suitable for settlement, yet the area of such land that will be opened up is by no means inconsiderable, and the proceeds of its sale will go far towards defraying the cost of the work. There can be no room for doubt that the traffic between the East and the West Coasts will, by this line, be developed enormously. It is estimated that, even now, were the line at work, there would be at the least 1,000 tons of coal alone brought across weekly; and if, as I believe, this coal, which is quite equal to the best Newcastle, can be put into ships' holds at Lyttelton for somewhere about £1 a ton, it is difficult to place any other limit than that of the carrying capacity of the line, upon the traffic that would be developed. There is also an almost unlimited quantity of timber, which would find its way to market by this railway. Honourable members will gather from the Engineer's report, that much careful exploration will be required before the exact route can be determined.