

The area of country to which it will afford improved means of communication comprises 120,000 acres of agricultural and 530,000 acres of good pastoral land, a large portion of which is still in the hands of the Crown.

ALBURY TO FAIRLIE CREEK.

Also in course of construction. The section already opened is one of the most profitable in the colony, and the extension will pass through an agricultural district, which is rapidly becoming settled. The Crown land which will be served by this line comprises 54,000 acres of agricultural and 1,000,000 acres of open pastoral land, in addition to 210,000 acres of freehold agricultural and 100,000 acres of freehold pastoral land.

FAIRLIE CREEK TO BURKE'S PASS.

The extension to Fairlie Creek will sufficiently serve the agricultural country to the entrance of the Pass; a further extension would be of little value unless continued through the Pass into the Mackenzie country; and the present progress of settlement in that district would not justify the expenditure.

WAIMATE BRANCH EXTENSION TO WAIHOA VALLEY.

As an addition of ten miles to the present short branch this extension could be worked at a very small increase upon the cost of the present service; and the quality and quantity of the land to be served, together with the already advanced stage of settlement in the district, induce us to recommend its construction as soon as further funds are available. A survey has already been made, at the cost of the residents, and the site for the line is promised free of charge.

COALGATE TO RAKAIA GORGE,

The line from Homebush to Hororata cannot be recommended as part of the proposed Canterbury Interior Main Line, which, as a whole, we altogether condemn; but an extension of the White Cliffs branch to the Gorge of the Rakaia will hereafter be desirable with a view to its ultimate continuation to the Acheron Coal Field, which is the most valuable yet found on the eastern side of the Middle Island. As regards the alternative routes by way of the Wairiri Valley and the Hororata Downs, the balance of advantages and disadvantages in each case is nearly equal. The Hororata route would serve the largest number of settlers, and would also be the cheaper to construct; while that by the Wairiri Valley is shorter, and would open up some seams of brown coal of the same quality as that obtained at Glentunnel.

We consider the latter to be the preferable route; but, as we do not recommend the early construction of either line, and as circumstances may materially change before a final decision upon this point will be required, we do not think it necessary to enter more fully into that part of the subject.

FERRYMEAD TO SUMNER.

We recommend this line for early construction. A portion of it, to the old railway wharf, is already made, and lying idle; and we believe that, when completed, it will not only bring in handsome returns upon its cost, but will also add considerably to the traffic on the main line.

SOUTHBRIDGE TO RAKAIA AND WATERTON.

The construction of this line would involve great expense in bridging the Rakaia and Ashburton Rivers, while it would compete for traffic with the main line as regards all stations between Rakaia and Winslow.

On these grounds we think it desirable that the work should not be undertaken.

CAVE TO ST. ANDREW'S.

We are of opinion that the district which it is proposed to serve by this line is already fairly provided for by the main line and the Albury branch.