

munication, and the consequent cheapening of the accessories of life, to insure their being properly prospected and opened out. Building stone of various kinds is also to be found in abundance. The prosecution of these industries under favourable circumstances must eventually lead to the settlement of a large population, depending in a great measure for supplies of merchandise and produce on outside markets. The only land available on the east side of the dividing range to the Ada Saddle would be second-class to inferior pastoral land for merino sheep. To the West of the Ada Saddle towards Reefton and Greymouth the land, if available for railway purposes (except the Maruia Plains), is covered, as we have already stated, by dense bush, and where cleared and sown with English grasses would only be fit for grazing stock. There might be a few patches which could be used for cropping. The Upper Maruia Plains—say, within fifteen miles of the line of railway—can only be utilized for grazing purposes. The whole of the unsold land is, we understand, a proclaimed gold field, and is not therefore available unless under arrangement with the Government; but if acquired we do not think a company could reckon upon selling it readily and settling a large population thereon. Having collected statistics and made estimates showing the goods, produce, and stock consumed on the West Coast, as well as the coal and timber imported into Lyttelton, and having carefully calculated the traffic returns on that basis, we find—assuming, as your prospectus suggests, 60 per cent. on the amount of the working expenses—that there is no reasonable hope of such an enterprise as that projected proving remunerative to the shareholders under the present Act. On the other hand, we are of opinion that the position of the Government in relation to this question is a very different one. . . .

We are, &c.,

JOHN INGLIS.

HUGH McILRAITH.

J. BEAUMONT.

To Captain Russell, Chairman, West Coast Railway Commission, Christchurch.

SIR,—

Railway League, Christchurch, New Zealand, 25th May, 1883.

As requested by you at an interview which you were good enough to grant to a Committee of this League to-day, I have now the honour to hand you herewith a memorandum representing the approximate annual consumption of coal and timber in the Canterbury District; and I might add that, with the exception of the deliveries of coal from Canterbury mines, which are furnished by the Manager of Railways, all the figures are taken from data supplied to the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce by the Collector of Customs at Christchurch. For your further information I beg to enclose a copy of the last annual report of the Chamber of Commerce; and I need not add that I shall be pleased if I can render the Commission any additional service. The memorandum now enclosed you will doubtless kindly append to the evidence which I had the honour of giving previously.

I have, &c.,

W. CHRYSTALL,

Chairman.

*Information supplied to the West Coast Railway Commission respecting Coal and Timber.*

To the Chairman, West Coast Railway Commission, Christchurch.

IMPORTS at Lyttelton for the year ending the 30th June, 1882; From New South Wales (Chamber of Commerce Report, page 31), 34,300 tons; ditto (page 32), 5,389 tons; from other parts of the colony (page 30), 10,900 tons. Deliveries from Canterbury mines (23,672 tons), as per returns furnished by Manager of Canterbury Railways (Chamber of Commerce Report, page 40): Glentunnel Mine, 6,203 tons; ditto, 2,119 tons; Whitecliffs Mine, 323 tons; Springfield Mine, 12,458 tons; Kowai Pass Mine, 628 tons; Sheffield Mine, 1,941 tons. Approximate consumption per annum in the Canterbury District, 30th June, 1882, 74,711 tons.

In April, 1883, the New Zealand Shipping Company commenced to use for their direct steamers at the rate of 1,250 tons per month, at the port of Lyttelton, which would increase the total consumption in Canterbury to about 90,000 tons per annum.

In addition to the above, there is every year some quantity of coal imported direct to Timaru. The figures representing the imports at Lyttelton are supplied by the Customs at Christchurch.

Imports of timber at the port of Lyttelton for the year ending 30th June, 1882, according to figures supplied by the Customs at Christchurch:—From other parts of New Zealand (see page 30, Chamber of Commerce Report): Timber, 20,355,800 feet; laths and shingles, 327,800 feet; sleepers, 42,814 feet. Also, seven cargoes of timber from Tasmania, of which particulars were not supplied. During the last twelve or eighteen months the whole of South Canterbury, as far north as Ashburton (inclusive), has been supplied with timber from the forests in Southland, the low railway tariff having enabled the mills in that quarter to compete successfully with Christchurch importers, so far as Ashburton and places south of that are concerned.

Christchurch, 25th May, 1883.

W. CHRYSTALL.

Mr. E. DOBSON, C.E., examined.

41. *Mr. Bell.*] Have you devoted any attention to the traffic on the proposed line to the West Coast?—Not at all. I am not in a position to give the slightest opinion as to what the traffic would be. I don't see any data at present to base it on.

42. Will you please show us the routes and explain them?—I have here the report that was made to the Provincial Government of Canterbury when first considering the question of making the West Coast road. There was great pressure put on the Government to make a coach road by way of Kaiapoi through the Hurunui Valley. Another portion of the community was anxious to get a road over Arthur's Pass, which was a much shorter route for driving stock from the southern part of the province than that just named. We adopted the road over Arthur's Pass. Mr. Blair recommends taking the West Coast railway from the present line, near Oxford. There is no doubt this is the shortest route from Christchurch, but the difficulties of a surface line at Arthur's Pass are, I think, insuperable. You would have to tunnel about two miles to make a practicable line. I don't think there is anything to be gained by wandering up Ada Pass or Lewis's Pass. With regard to any rivalry between the northern and western railways, I think it seems a mistake to connect the two at all. If you want the line north, you want the shortest to the North Island; and for the West Coast line you ought to make the terminus at Greymouth, which is the centre of population and about the centre of the traffic.

43. You have no idea of the grade that might be obtained through Walker's Pass?—1 in 50. You can get grades of 1 in 50 all up the Waimakariri country.

44. Do you know what route was surveyed by Mr. G. P. Williams?—Up the Waimakariri to the Bealey and down the Otira Gorge. I think he began at the bridge over the Waimakariri on the Oxford and Sheffield line.

45. In the atlas of maps attached to your report to the Provincial Government of Canterbury is there anything like a section of the Hurunui and Teremakau?—Yes; it is all given in great detail. You have sloping hills on each side in the Hurunui and Teremakau Valleys. In the other gorges you have not. You have a line already made nearly to the Hurunui, which gives the Hurunui route an advantage over the other lines proposed. If you went up the Hurunui, you would not go near Reefton.