

settlement and cultivation is advancing in this district to such a degree as to give grounds for predicting that before very long all the land will be under cultivation or permanent pasture, and when that is the case it is fair to presume that this line will be remunerative, especially as it will combine a traffic in timber, coal, and stone with the ordinary agricultural and passenger traffic.

The proposed extension to Bowyer's Creek would be a distance of 3 miles 60 chains, the cost of which I roughly estimate at £12,500. It has been proposed to take the line over the existing road-bridge, which would need to be strengthened for the purpose: this would lengthen the line by about 34 chains, and the cost would be, approximately, £10,950. If the line were made to cross Bowyer's Creek, which it should do, the cost of the bridge must be added to the above estimates. This bridge would cost about £1,500.

I will summarize the conclusions which I have formed on the subject of the extension of the Mount Somers Railway as follows: First, that an extension of the line is not suitable to give access to the district of the Upper Hinds and Rangitata, for which purpose the best route would be a branch line starting from somewhere near the Station of Westerfield. Second, that no good purpose could be served by extending the line up the south bank of the Ashburton River towards the Gorge. Third, the only extension which is likely to benefit the Mount Somers District and increase the traffic of the line is that to Bowyer's Creek.

I have, &c.,

31st January, 1884.

C. NAPIER BELL.