

good dray and coach road could no doubt be obtained along the green route; but it is not, I think, in any case the most favourable means of connection with southern Westland, as explained hereafter.

The best means of connecting the railway with southern Westland is, I think, undoubtedly along the purple line to Kumara, and thence to the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway, with an alternative, indicated by dotted purple line, to Hokitika. Along the route indicated by strong-purple line from the Midland Railway to Kumara, and thence to the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway, a railway could readily be constructed, if found to be justifiable hereafter; and there is at present a first-class coach-road along it from the Midland Railway-line to Kumara, being a portion of the existing coach-road between Hokitika and Christchurch.

It is true that from Kumara to the Midland Railway, along the green line, the distance is only thirteen miles, while by the purple line it is twenty-two miles and a half; but, as against this, there is along the purple line a first-class road, with good grades and an established traffic, which will probably always continue, whereas along the green line the grades are not so good, a considerable portion of the line is merely a horse-track, and it is doubtful if any considerable traffic would ensue upon it, in view of the established traffic and superior advantages of the existing coach-road. Besides this, too, although the road-journey to Kumara would be shorter by the green line, it would involve ten miles additional railway journey.

I should perhaps explain here that I am considering this phase of the question entirely from a Christchurch-to-West-Coast point of view, as I do not apprehend that in any case any one from Kumara or southern Westland would go to the Midland Railway in order to get to Greymouth, the natural route for that traffic being along the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway.

It should also be pointed out that, although the distance from the Midland Railway to Kumara by the green line is some nine or ten miles shorter than by the purple line, it is only three miles shorter to Hokitika, the distance from Hokitika to the Midland Railway at Lake Brunner by the dotted and strong-green lines being thirty-two miles, as compared with the distance from Hokitika to the Midland Railway at the crossing of the Teremakau by the dotted and strong-purple lines, which is thirty-five miles.

As regards existing interests, immediately along the contract and proposed deviation lines themselves, there are very few, and there is only one in which any real hardship would be inflicted—namely, the case of a man named Mitchell, who has an accommodation-house on the bank of Lake Brunner, at the junction of green and blue lines.

In his case, having reckoned for so long on the railway coming past him, it would be, at any rate, an act of grace for the company, if the deviation is granted, to offer him a piece of land, adjacent to the railway and lake, on the deviation line, in exchange for the land he is now in occupation of, and possibly something for moving his house. But there is nobody else who would be materially injured.

Mr. Bruce, who owns the land coloured red on map, between twenty-third and twenty-seventh mile on original line, would, no doubt, feel aggrieved were the railway taken entirely away from him; but, as a matter of fact, the deviation-line comes quite close to one end of his land, and he has therefore all the convenience of the railway without any of the inconveniences which would be involved by severance, &c. He does not, therefore, as I understand him, raise any serious objection to the deviation, as affecting him personally, although he appears to be individually of opinion that the original line is the best one. A letter, which he has written to the Hon. the Premier on the subject, is attached hereto.

On the whole, therefore, I am of opinion that the advantages to be obtained by the deviation, which are very considerable, are very much greater than the disadvantages of abandoning the original line, which are very slight, and I would therefore recommend that the deviation be assented to.

This recommendation is of course on the assumption that the deviation-line, on final survey, turns out, as is anticipated, to be only very slightly longer than original line; and also on the assumption that the grades turn out to be very much better than on the original line. As to the latter item, however, I have no doubt at all.

I have, &c.,

C. Y. O'CONNOR,

Under-Secretary for Public Works.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Wellington.

P.S.—As the works on the proposed deviation would undoubtedly be cheaper than on the original line, there should be a saving in land-grant if the deviation is permitted, and it would be well to get the company to agree to this before authorising the deviation, if approved.—C. Y. O'C.

### Enclosure.

Mr. T. W. BRUCE to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Inchbourne, Lake Brunner, 10th March, 1890.

As Mr. O'Connor has been here making inquiries on behalf of the Government, *re* deviation of the Midland Railway Company's line at Lake Brunner, as a resident who has a large stake in the future development of the district, I venture to put my views of the matter before you, and hope that it will not be deemed presumption.

In my opinion the new line does not open up the country so well as the old line, and simply avoids the fine scenery at Lake Brunner.

The questions of cost, grade, and distance apart, the old line opens up more land for present and future development. Near the lake it is dry, and the beaches are nicer, and it is far more attractive for settlement and building-sites, and it seems certain that it will pay to gather timber up to it for a far greater distance seaward and southerly than if the timber had to be hauled up to the lake, and thence across it to line upon the eastern side.