

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

PROPOSED DEVIATION NEAR LAKE BRUNNER (REPORT ON, BY THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Fergus, with the Leave of the House.

The ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

Memorandum re Deviation of Midland Railway at Lake Brunner.

THE only objection that I see to the proposal of the Midland Railway Company to divert the line to the eastern side of Lake Brunner is that it takes the railway away from the nearest point to Kumara and the Greenstone district.

As laid off, the line comes within about twelve miles of Kumara; but, if the deviation is decided on, the nearest point—Jackson's—will be twenty-three or twenty-four miles from Kumara. It may be contended that Kumara will be connected to the East Coast by rail direct when the Hokitika-Greymouth line is made; but this route is a very circuitous one. The distance from Lake Brunner at the Greenstone Road, round by Greymouth, to a point opposite Kumara, is about forty miles, and there is three or four miles of road to travel after this. It would therefore be quicker to leave the railway at Lake Brunner, and coach the twelve miles to Kumara. There is also the contingency of a connecting line of railway being made at some future time from Lake Brunner to a junction with the Hokitika line opposite Kumara. Whether such a line would best come from Lake Brunner or Jackson's, is a question that can only be determined by actual survey, but there is no doubt as to the former being the best route for a coach-road.

Saving the rise of 190ft. over the ridge on the western side of the lake is undoubtedly a considerable advantage, but it is not so great as at first sight appears, for the ruling gradient against the traffic eastwards is only reduced from 1 in 55 to 1 in 57; there being a short piece of 1 in 57 near Stillwater, and another of 1 in 60 near Kokiri. If the proposed deviation had reduced the ruling gradient between Stillwater and Teremakau to 1 in 66 or 1 in 70, it would have been well worth making. The deviation will make some saving in the consumption of coal, but the weight that the locomotive can haul is not increased.

The company expects that the deviation will save about three-quarters of a mile. I am afraid that when the line comes to be set out there will be no saving—rather a loss, for the general direction of the deviation is not nearly as straight as that of the surveyed line. I believe, however, that there will be a considerable saving in the first cost, for the deviation goes through easier country. The land is also better; so also is the timber. Altogether, however, there is not much to choose from between the two lines, and the question can be settled on other than engineering considerations, if necessary. I suppose the Government would share in the advantage of a cheaper line. I shall be glad to show you the plans any time at your convenience.

Public Works Department (Engineer-in-Chief's Office),
Wellington, 8th January, 1890.

W. N. BLAIR,
Engineer-in-Chief.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,300 copies), 15s.]