

## RANGIORA TO OXFORD (21 Miles)

1. The formation runs mostly along the public road. The drainage has been very troublesome from overflows of the Cust, and the side-ditches have been faced with planks and stones in places, and in other places with dry walls of stone.

2. The rails are 30lb. iron, with the most objectionable Ibbotson joints. The rails are in very fair condition, and with the light traffic they carry will last for years, but it is only fair to them that they should be jointed with proper fish-plates as the Ibbotson joints injure the ends. The points and crossings are 40lb. steel, and nearly all the curves are the same. The line is very well ballasted, and has a good running top.

3. There are only three bridges, which have been entirely renewed in ironbark, and two have concrete piers and abutments. Several open culverts are concrete and ironbark, consequently they are entirely good.

4. There is a small length of fencing near Rangiora, and some more near Oxford, all in fair condition, though some repairs to posts are wanted. Cattle-stops have ironbark beams, but the sills and frames are mostly far gone in decay. Gates and signboards are good.

5. Intermediate stations are in good condition, most of the platforms have new concrete fronts, all buildings are in very good repair. Loading-banks and cattle-pens good, with a touch of decay now and then. Privies and urinals good and clean, though in some the timber-posts are going at ground-level. At West Oxford, platform, with concrete front, very good, station-building very good and well kept, picket-fences neat and good, goods-shed very good, crane in good order, coal store getting old, tank-stand and small store in good condition. Engine-shed, loading-bank, very good. Privies and urinals good and clean.

## WEST OXFORD TO SHEFFIELD (12 Miles)

1. Formation in good order, line weedy in places.

2. The rails are 40lb. steel, in good condition. The ballast is scanty in places, in other places well ballasted. There are a number of bad sleepers, but on the whole the sleepers are pretty good. The line is kept in good running order.

3. The Waimakariri Gorge Bridge is in very good condition, except the planking of the roadway, which is getting somewhat rotten at the ends. Most of the smaller bridges are entirely renewed in ironbark, and are in excellent condition. Bridge 168 has been extensively renewed in ironbark, but more renewals will be necessary before long, as the original native timber is fast decaying in many places, the bridge is safe for the light engines that pass over it, but scarcely so for heavier engines. There is an unusually large number of open culverts, most of which have been rebuilt in concrete and ironbark, and are now very good. Many of these culverts are new, in addition to those originally built. The necessity for them arose from a heavy flood washing away parts of the line several years ago. One over-bridge has a few decayed parts of little consequence.

4. The fencing is mostly gorse hedges, which are very good, but about nine miles of the line have either private fences or are unfenced. There are very few cattle-stops, and these have been renewed with ironbark beams, the frames of one or two are getting rotten, the rest are old but good yet. Signboards and gates are getting old, but are in good repair.

5. The small flag-stations are all in good order, the timber-work of platforms and loading-banks has had many repairs, and it will be some time before it requires more. At Sheffield, platform, coal store, and station-building have had some small repairs, and are in good condition and well kept. Privies and urinals good and clean. Cattle-pen renewed in iron rail, tank-stand and water, &c., are in good condition.

## BENNET'S JUNCTION TO KAIAPOI (21 Miles).

1. Formation in good order and clear of weeds.

2. Fifteen miles of rails are 30lb. iron. The metal of these rails is very good, and they have lasted remarkably well, though somewhat worn, very few are scaled or laminated. They are fastened with Ibbotson joints, but with light traffic and engines these rails will last many years yet. The curves are laid with 40lb. steel. Five miles of the road are laid with 40lb. iron rails, and they are in very good condition. The road is well ballasted, and kept in excellent running condition. We had no chance of seeing the sleepers except in one place where new 40lb. steel rails were being laid round a curve, and there were a few half-rotten among those exposed.

3. The bridges are small, and in very good condition, most of them are concrete and ironbark, the others have ironbark or totara piles, with ironbark tops and beams. In only one did we detect a little decay in the sap of one or two piles. Open culverts are concrete and ironbark, in excellent condition.

4. There are no fences, as the line runs along the roadside, the hedge and fences on each of which are private. Cattle-stops have all been provided with ironbark beams, the sills and frames are old looking, but still in fair preservation. Signboards and gates old but good.

5. Station-buildings, shelter-sheds, goods-shed, platelayers' and Stationmaster's cottages are in good condition, and well-kept, platforms, timber fronts old but good, except in few places, where a little decay is going on. The tank-stand and windmill at Swannanoa are in good condition. There are no privies and urinals, which is embarrassing.

6. Mile-posts are made out of rail-ends.

## HORNBY JUNCTION TO SOUTHBRIDGE (25 Miles).

1. Formation in good order.

2. There are eight miles of 53lb. steel rails, four miles of 40lb. steel, two miles of 45lb. steel, and eleven miles of 40lb. iron. The steel rails are in good condition; the iron rails are very fair, only a few showing signs of wear. The line is well ballasted, the sleepers are in good ordinary condition—that is to say, with not more than the usual proportion of dozed, or half-rotten sleepers. The line is in good running order and well kept.