

Without knowing something of the proposed railway system, particularly the grades, distances to centres of production, nature of traffic, exact figures are impossible. I have assumed 1-in-40 grades, one length of railway 50 miles long, stations about 2 miles apart, all furnishing traffic; that business enough to pay 5 per cent. interest will be available, and that an average rate of 6d. per ton-mile may be charged on goods.

Though 20 lb. per lineal yard rails were used for war purposes, I would strongly recommend 30 lb. (or heavier) as more economical where passenger traffic is to be run, and have figured accordingly.

I estimate approximate costs as under:—

		Cost per Mile, 1919 Prices.	Normal Prices.
		£	£
Land, earthworks, bridges, culverts, fencing	860	840
30 lb. rails, fish-plates, bolts, spikes	1,150	580
Ballast, sleepers, laying rails	600	600
Station buildings and equipment	200	175
Rolling-stock	600	350
Engineering expenses	150	150
		£3,560	£2,695

If roads are followed and railway built at the side, up to £400 per mile might be saved.

If 20 lb. rails were used, £180 per mile would be saved in normal times and £380 now.

Assuming roads are made use of in parts, the average cost per mile of railway fully equipped may be taken as £2,500 in normal times and £3,400 now.

The cost of material to be obtained in England would normally be, per mile, £950, and at present prices £1,850.

If you require my services in connection with any purchases, I expect to be in England till towards the end of August.

H. VICKERMAN.

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister of New Zealand, London.

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