

push ahead steadily with the construction from the Matiere end towards Heao Valley, and next year to renew operations at the Tahora end. By this programme work at the two ends should simultaneously encounter the difficult section referred to. I estimate that there will then be money available to enable this section to be dealt with under concentration methods. The detail surveys are not yet complete, but given adequate votes three years should see the completion of work up to the heavy section.

It is anticipated that the Opunake Branch line will be completed and out of hand within the next two years.

Having thus defined the present objectives of railway-works now in actual course of construction and enabled the House to appreciate the probable demands upon the Public Works Fund for the present and the near future for the completion of those works to the objectives, I now invite consideration of three special undertakings upon which I advise that the expenditure of moneys available should next be concentrated.

The first is Westport-Inangahua. At present the whole export of the Westport coalfields finds outlet from Westport Harbour. A large proportion of this coal is shipped to the east coast of the South Island. If these fields were given railway connection to the East and West Coast Railway systems, now connected by the opening of the Otira Tunnel, the coal would be transported over the railway and earn freight, not only over this particular section but over from 200 to 250 miles of open railway. The provision of railway communication would also lead to the opening-up of other coalfields, to say nothing of the interchange of stock and farming products from Canterbury.

The other two works are of practically equal importance, each being designed to provide improved connection between the Port of Wellington and the districts in the Dominion lying to the north-east and north-west of that port. They are known as Tawa Flat deviation of the Wellington—Palmerston North portion of the North Island Main Trunk line, and the Rimutaka Deviation of the Wellington—Wairarapa line.

The increasing difficulty of running suburban and general traffic on grades such as exist on the Manawatu line has become so intense that it is impossible to extend services unless the line is double-tracked at least as far as Tawa Flat. It would be absurd to double-track the existing alignment if a better alignment can be found. Trial surveys have been made which show that a double-track line can be built on grades and alignment between three and four times as favourable as the present route.

The Rimutaka Deviation is recognized as a necessary work which should be put in hand and carried to completion at the earliest possible time.

The intention of the foregoing statement is to show that as work is completed or expenditure slackens on sections approaching completion so shall we be able to enlarge expenditure on other works now proceeding under restricted finance, and undertake other works which have been awaiting their turn in the order of their urgency and importance.

While, owing to the continuance of a certain measure of unemployment, it has been necessary to continue a number of works which otherwise would have been temporarily closed down to enable a policy of concentration to be given full effect, the extraordinary results which have been achieved from the policy of partial concentration as indicated by the number of miles of line which will be ready for handing over in two years' time, must convince honourable members of the soundness of that policy. Not only will the capital invested in works become reproductive at the earliest possible date, but those works which are for the time being deferred will actually be completed in a much shorter time under concentrated effort than would have been the case had a greater number of works been kept going under methods other than those of concentration. The best results can be achieved only by planning out a definite programme that is possible with ways and means available, and driving that programme with all the plant, mechanical apparatus, and human energy that can be economically employed on its completion.