

The above developments make the question of terminal facilities at Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch particularly urgent. For instance, the increase in mileage actually connected with the port of Auckland since 1914 has been 137 miles; and by the year 1931 a further length of 220 miles will be added, without taking into consideration the Taranaki connection now in course of construction. Since 1914, the length of additional railway connected with the system centring upon Christchurch is 166 miles, and a further 60 miles will in all probability be added by the year 1931.

After the most mature deliberation on the proposals I do not hesitate to assure the taxpayers of the Dominion that they need have no misgivings as to the expenditure, as I am satisfied that from the point of view of return on the outlay the proposals will amply justify themselves.

WORKS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE RAILWAYS IMPROVEMENT AUTHORIZATION ACT, 1914.

	Estimated Cost of Improvements. £
New stations and station-yards, goods-sheds, and terminal facilities at Auckland, Wellington, Palmerston North, Hastings, Lyttelton, Christchurch, Addington (including a connecting-line between the Addington-Culverden line from a point about 48 chains from Addington Junction running in a south-westerly direction and the main south line at a point about 9 miles 50 chains from Lyttelton, as shown on Plan No. 21769, deposited in the Government Railway Offices at Wellington), and Timaru	1,570,000
Duplications: Penrose-Papakura, Ohinewai-Huntly, Horotiu-Frankton, Newmarket-New Lynn, and Lyttelton Tunnel	485,000
Grade-easements: Penrose-Mercer, Mercer-Frankton, Frankton - Te Kuiti, and Palmerston North - Marton	250,000
New engine-depot and approach-lines at Auckland	140,000
Additions to workshops at Newmarket and Petone	60,000
New line, Auckland to Westfield, as shown on Plan No. 21997, deposited in the Government Railway Offices, Wellington	375,000
Signalling, interlocking, and safety appliances	270,000
Bridge-strengthening	50,000
Total	£3,200,000

The intention was to complete the works in five years, but the intervention of the war rendered that impossible, and for the past ten years the Department has been carrying on its operations, entailing the handling of five million additional passengers and one million additional tons of goods per annum, with facilities that were considered to be inadequate for dealing with the traffic which was handled in 1914.

Of the works included in the above schedule it was found practicable to carry out the following:—

	Spent to 19th July, 1924. £
Auckland yard reclamation, &c.	296,668
New engine-depot, &c... .. .	28,791
Auckland-Westfield—new line	9,671
Grade-easements, Penrose-Mercer	240,534
Grade-easements, Palmerston North - Marton	12,708
Grade-easements, Mercer - Te Kuiti	602
Duplications, Horotiu-Frankton and Newmarket - New Lynn	5,234
Wellington new yard	32,547
Hastings new yard	1,871
Christchurch new yard	5,712
Addington marshalling-yard	11,777
Lyttelton rearrangement	3,206
Workshops additions, Newmarket and Petone	35,962
Plant, steam-shovels	12,014
Hayward's improvements, automatic signalling	2,248
Signals	264,140
	£963,685