Rimutaka Deviation.

Engineering difficulties make any alleviation of the slow and costly movement of traffic over the present incline a matter of considerable expenditure, which, as traffic grows, will have to be faced. There is, however, a means whereby on the existing line an early and comparatively cheap method of expediting trains to some extent and reducing costs could be secured—viz., by building suitable articulated engines for this particular service—probably £50,000 would cover the cost of such machines, and they could be at work within twelve months.

Other Proposals.

With regard to the proposed expenditure upon locomotive workshops and equipment, our report upon "Management (Mechanical)" deals fully with the needs of the railway under this heading.

The various items of proposed expenditure upon doubling of lines and smaller deviations, together with strengthening of bridges, should doubtless be carried out as soon as possible, and the same remark applies to the electric lighting, signals, telephones, and telegraphs.

There are a number of items of expenditure proposed for rearrangement of stations; our remarks upon the Wellington and Auckland lay-out apply to these. They should be studied in the light of changed train-operation facilities. It may be that some of these will be found unnecessary under altered conditions.

New Lines.

The location and order of construction of new lines for developmental purposes are questions upon which we do not feel competent to express a decided opinion; only those who know the country and its possibilities are competent to offer suggestions of value upon these subjects; there is, however, one important link in the chain of railway communication upon which we think it desirable to express an opinion—viz., that of the gap between Ward and Parnassus. It is not so much in the local advantage of such a line that we view its completion as of greater importance than some other railways upon which considerable sums have been spent; it is because of the possibilities offered by its construction of making a complete railway transport system between all parts of the North and South Islands without change of carriage in the case of passengers or break of bulk or delay in the incidence of goods traffic that we advocate its construction.

Train Ferry between Picton and Wellington.

With this line in being a train ferry between Picton and Wellington (or, if possible, a bay with sheltered water and easily available by a short railway nearer the South Island) would give all the advantages of throughout rail transit between the two Islands. Some day, no doubt, this form of communication will be established. The sooner it is done, looked at from a railway administration point of view only, the earlier will be the time when it will be possible to operate the system as a whole as economically and efficiently as in countries where lines are not disjointed. The public aspect needs but little demonstration.

Throughout communication would make the two Islands one in so far as transport is concerned. Internal trade would benefit by through rates and fares and avoidance of break of bulk. The cost of landing stations and ferry-boats capable of conveying upwards of fifty ordinary goods vehicles need not entail very great expenditure in proportion to the advantages foreshadowed and the prospects of revenue to be obtained. Probably £500,000 would be found sufficient.

Wherever train ferries have been provided they have developed travel and traffic to a very much greater extent than obtained under former shipping conditions. Between Denmark and Sweden, Germany and Sweden, in North and South America, this form of bridging the seas has been adopted with success. Recently a train-ferry service has commenced to run across the North Sea between Harwich and Zeebrugge.