

There are some fairly extensive blocks of timber in the district that would be served by the line, but having regard to the shorter haul from stations on the Ross-Otira Section, it is not likely that there would be any rapid development of the timber trade from the district that would be served by the proposed line to Canterbury, which is the principal market for timber produced on the West Coast.

With reference to the prospective development of the district and its relation to the railway, the Board cannot see any great possibilities. The position in regard to coal and timber has been already dealt with, and, so far as farming is concerned, the district that would be tapped by the line has very limited scope for development.

It appears to the Board that there is no justification for the line. The cost of construction is high, being over £37,000 per mile. The Board is of opinion that, if the line returned any net revenue at all on operating, the amount would fall far short of the interest charges, and that the net result would be a further burden on the taxpayers of the Dominion, without any commensurate advantage to the Dominion as a whole.

The Board's conclusion, therefore, is that the completion of the Westport-Inangahua line is not justified.

PART V.—WAIOTIRA-DARGAVILLE.

The line dealt with in this part of the report—namely, from Waiotira to Dargaville—may for the purposes of the report be conveniently divided into the following sections :—

Waiotira-Kirikopuni (14 miles of open line).—The construction of this section was commenced prior to the Great War, but was suspended in 1915. The work was recommenced in 1921, and on the 15th May, 1928, the line was handed over to the Railways Department and has since been operated as an open line.

Kirikopuni-Tangowahine (10¼ miles).—The construction of this section is completed, but the line has not yet been handed over to the Railways Department, and is being operated by the Public Works Department.

Tangowahine-Dargaville (7¼ miles).—This section is still incomplete and construction has been stopped.

The capital cost of the Waiotira-Dargaville line is shown in the following summary :—

	Distance.	Total Cost.	Cost per Mile.
	Miles.	£	£
Waiotira-Kirikopuni (open line)—			
Actual cost of construction	14	1,059,350	75,668
Kirikopuni-Tangowahine (completed but still under control of the Public Works Department)	10¼	}	}
Tangowahine-Dargaville (construction stopped)	7¼		
Actual expenditure to 31st July, 1931, on this 17½ miles	448,439	
Estimated cost of completing from Tangowahine to Dargaville	..	46,000	28,254
Totals	31½	1,553,789	
Average cost per mile of line	49,327

	£
Total amount expended to 31st July, 1931 ..	1,507,789
Total amount estimated as required for completion ..	46,000
	<u>£1,553,789</u>