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HAMILTON, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1964

WEATHER—Isolated Showers

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'Will transform the city'

UNDERGROUND RAIL OPENED

New Zealand's first underground railway line is in operation. The one and a-half-mile link between Frankton and Claudelands was officially opened by the Prime Minister, Mr Holyoake, this morning in what was described as one of the most historic moments in Hamilton's history and one which would transform the face of the city.

Even the rain, which threatened throughout the final stages, failed to dampen enthusiasm for the occasion. More than 200 official guests filled the area in front of the dais and hundreds more packed lawns and vantage points around the rear of the Hamilton station.

Until a few minutes before the ceremony it appeared the "wet-weather" programme would have to be implemented and the function held on the station

Aircraft diverted

The Prime Minister, Mr Holyoake, had the limitations of Rukuhia

platform. But the late arrival of the Prime Minister and the temporary relenting of the elements allowed the occasion to proceed as planned and it was all over bar the shouting when the inevitable heavy drops, warded off by a sea of umbrellas, started to fall.

Mr Holyoake, who braved the rain without coat or umbrella described the occasion as a "tremendous milestone in the history of Hamilton and the transport industry."

"Continued progress is being made throughout the country but this underground line is an entirely new concept," he said. "It will mean a maintenance of vital services, coupled with an easing of your city's traffic problems."

Hand in hand with this development were going such projects as the new marshalling yards at Te Rapa and the combined rail-road service depot to be constructed in the city.

Hamilton was slowly but surely absorbing Frankton which, it was not generally known, was New Zealand's busiest railway station. Some indication of the growth of railways business at Frankton and Hamilton was provided by freight figures which totalled 3500 tons in 1880. By 1900 this figure had risen to 10,000 tons, by 1955 to more than 300,000 tons and now to 430,000 tons, for a total revenue of £500,000.

Mr Holyoake paid tribute to all who had brought the project to fulfilment, including the Hamilton City Council, the Ministry of Works and private contractors. The total cost of £1,100,000 was made up of £600,000 from the National Roads Board, £200,000 from the city and the balance from Government sources.

Tracing the history of the lowering project, the Mayor of Hamilton, Dr Denis Rogers, said this "dream come true" was first advanced in 1919. The for-

mation of the National Roads Board had finally made it possible, together with remarkable co-operation between the city, the Government, and Government departments.

The Member for Hamilton, Mr L. Adams-Schneider, said it was appropriate the project had come to fruition in the city's centennial year and also that it involved the Railways Department which had played such a great part in the area's development.

After the opening ceremony, the official party boarded an old train and travelled to Claudelands. There they transferred into a railcar.

The railcar—the first official train to cross the lowered railway line—rolled gently to a stop at the underground station at 12.10 p.m.

Although the last passenger train crosses the old railway bridge today, a few infrequent work trains will use the old line for another week.



UNDER THE SUPERVISION of engine driver Mr Lott Faby, the Prime Minister, Mr Holyoake, opens the throttle of the old WAB locomotive which took the official party across the river to the Claudelands Station. The party returned to Hamilton station in an 88-seater railcar.

