

195. It would be impossible, would it not, from the nature of the country, to put the tramways so as to carry timber from the Greenstone Road—the country on the eastern side of these hills—down to the sea-beach?—It would be impossible to put railways or tramways, except by two particular lines, which are now occupied by the road and tramways. You could not put direct lines through the bush.

196. You have made an actual survey from the Greenstone Road?—I have.

197. Is there any timber along the beach that would be marketable?—No; along the beach there is no timber of any value at all. It is all stunted scrub and bush, which is spoilt by the sea breezes.

198. Inland, between Christchurch Road, Greenstone Road, and this, can you tell us about what is the nature of the country?—It is fine flat bush, abounding in splendid red pine, silver pine, and rata. There are very large pieces of bush containing very large quantities of silver pine and rata. The former is the most valuable wood we have.

199. This would be practically shut out, would it not, if the line was along the beach?—If the line was along the beach it would not be opened in any way whatever.

200. Where are the supplies principally brought from to Kumara—the stores and so on?—They are brought from both Hokitika and Greymouth. They are brought from Hokitika by road, and Greymouth by tramway.

201. Do you know how many trams per day are running to Kumara?—There is a little alteration, but there were three a day each way.

202. Do you know how many wagons?—There is not much road traffic from Greymouth, but an immense traffic from Hokitika.

203. I wish to get at the number of horses employed in bringing stuff from Kumara by tram, and then we will take those bringing from Hokitika. In addition to the three trams running from Kumara to Greymouth, how many luggage trams are there daily?—I think there are but two. It is a subject I am not prepared to give much evidence upon. There are also a good many carts on the road. There is a road from Greymouth to Kumara as well as the tramway, but it is over a very high range, and goods are not carried to a great extent by it.

204. Do you know how many coaches there are running from Hokitika to Kumara daily, passing through Waimea and Stafford Town?—I think there are four coaches daily, each way.

205. Do you know how many wagons are on the road?—There is Keech and Malley's, Cameron's, Grey's, Smith's, and several others.

206. How long does it take them to go from Kumara to Hokitika and back?—They go one day and come back the next.

207. What tonnage would you estimate they would take each time?—The wagons are calculated to carry seven tons each time; but it is a matter I am not well up in.

208. Well, an average?—At the lowest I would put the average at four tons each. They carry seven occasionally. They are seven-horse teams.

209. That would be forty-eight tons per week drawn by wagons from Hokitika?—Yes.

210. Are there drays as well?—Yes.

211. What would you consider to be the number of passengers travelling by these coaches? What are they licensed to carry?—They vary—about fourteen passengers each, I think. At present I would put down a hundred daily for the two lines, seven hundred a week. The fares are very expensive, and it is bad travelling.

212. Is the population likely to be a permanent one at Kumara?—From what I know of it it is the most permanent gold field we have in New Zealand. It has every appearance of it. Within the last three or four weeks there has been a considerable extension of the gold field, and when the Government sludge-channel and other similar works are in full play, there will be a very large number of works to be done, and country opened up. The whole country appears to be auriferous, and it is a mere matter of time to open it all up.

213. Has there been an additional population since 1878 settled down at the northern side of the Teremakau River?—At Cape Terrace rush?

214. Yes.—Yes, considerable during the last few months.

215. What would you estimate the population of the Greenstone District at? It is set down in 1878 at 506 persons, what would you put it at now?—Well, the men are engaged now driving to their claims, so that they are employing few hands, but I would put them down at 200 in that locality. That track has just been made by the county authorities. I have been along it and found men driving all along the terrace.

216. Are the works of a permanent nature on the Westbrook side?—Yes. There is a large water-race called the Erin-go-bragh, which must be five or six miles long.

217. What is the carrying capacity of that race?—I should think thirty heads, perhaps.

218. Are there any engineering difficulties on this loop?—In the deviation? No; there are no engineering difficulties whatever. I may safely say that. I have already stated so, I think. If the railway had been carried by the present line of road there would be very great engineering difficulties to be encountered, because the present road is taken over this cluster of hills, but by going round the cluster, instead of going over it, it would not be so difficult.

219. What would be the length of the branch line from Whitcombe to Kumara?—Seven miles.

220. And from Goldsborough to Flowery Creek?—I have estimated the distance from Goldsborough to Arahura, but I am not quite sure what the distance is to Flowery Creek. It would be about seven miles.

221. Well, Mr. Wylde, you are an engineer by profession?—Yes.

222. If you were an engineer for a private company, and if it was contemplated to lay a line between Hokitika and Greymouth for the carriage of passengers and goods, and if you were asked a question as to the most favourable route of country, what would you advise under the circumstances? Where would you advise the lines to be laid, and your reasons why?—Well, as an engineer, I should always consider it my duty to lay out a line that would best supply the wants of the country. One drawing traffic from both sides is double the advantage of another drawing traffic from one side only, and, when the two alternatives present themselves, an engineer is bound to choose the one that would