

*Mr. Wylde.*  
3rd Dec., 1879.

271. From what you know of a mining population, do you know if this loop line was constructed between the two places whether the passenger traffic would be very much increased?—Yes; it is the invariable rule that the means of traffic makes the population travel about. I may say that, within a week of its being opened, the traffic would be doubled. Travelling by these coaches is alike disagreeable and expensive, so that people only travel when they are obliged to, but if a railway was opened they would travel on every slight occasion.

272. Then, in point of reproductiveness, you think the traffic would be increased by the loop line?—I think it would be one of the best lines in the country. I know of no lines of that length superior, except such as the Lyttelton and Christchurch line.

273. *Mr. McLean.*] Would you rely on goods traffic and passengers alone paying that line?—Yes.

274. Would the traffic and people amount to £5,000 per annum?—Yes.

275. There is good timber, is there not, on the one side of it?—Yes, all the way.

276. That would be get-at-able?—Yes; there is silver pine and rata.

277. That is valuable timber?—Yes; silver pine is the most valuable timber known in the world for bridge-work or anything of that kind.

278. May I ask you how you arrive at the £5,000 per mile?—Well, I have taken generally the cost in New Zealand and similar country to this, and I have taken the highest cost for that sort of country as not exceeding £5,000 a mile. You make some that cost more.

279. That includes the permanent way and everything?—Yes; it is shown by contracts which have been let at prices fully 30 per cent. below the original estimate.

THURSDAY, 4TH DECEMBER, 1879.

*Mr. Lahmann.*  
4th Dec., 1879.

HON. MR. LAHMANN, M.L.C., examined.

280. *The Chairman.*]—You are a member of the Upper House, and you were also Chairman of the County Council of Westland when this line of railway was first proposed?—Yes, when the survey of the line was taken.

281. You know the locality through which the railway is to be taken?—I do.

282. Do you know anything about the distance as laid down in the original plan?—I think it is about twenty-two miles.

283. What will the distance be along the route of the proposed deviation?—I can hardly say the distance.

284. Would you say that it was good available country for railway-construction purposes?—Yes, I should think so. There does not appear to be many engineering difficulties in the way of making a railway line.

285. There are not many engineering difficulties you think?—I think not.

286. Are you aware that there is a line of tramway between Greymouth and Kumara?—Yes.

287. And there are no engineering difficulties along that line?—None whatever. The only engineering difficulties that do exist are along the route between Kumara and Stafford Town.

288. I need scarcely ask you anything about the probable cost of making such a line?—I could hardly tell you anything about that.

289. In regard to population, you know of your own knowledge there is but a limited population between Greymouth and Hokitika along the beach?—Yes, I am aware the population is but limited.

290. And round the other way, how does the population stand there?—Of course, there are centres of population on that route. There are centres of population at Kumara, Waimea, and other places where mining is carried on.

291. What about the probable amount of passenger traffic between Greymouth and Kumara, and Hokitika and Kumara?—Well, I can hardly answer that question. The returns from the tramway would be a better criterion of the passenger traffic than any estimate that I could give.

292. *Mr. Bunny.*] The tramway runs three times per day each way, besides which, there is a coach running mornings and evenings?—Perhaps so. I cannot say exactly.

293. *The Chairman.*] What do you know of the district along the proposed route—I mean the route inland?—My opinion is that it is the only means for making a line by way of the Kumara.

294. But what is your opinion of the district as regards the probable amount of traffic?—I consider the supplies would be sent up to the mining districts along the line by rail. These would no doubt be forwarded by rail, and, besides, the passenger traffic would be considerable—sufficient in my opinion to make the line pay.

295. That is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

296. What is your opinion as to the permanency of the districts—the Waimea, Kumara, Greenstone, Stafford, &c. Do you think these places are likely to be worked out soon?—Speaking from past experience I should say it would take a good many years to work these places out. Besides, there is a good deal of country in the immediate neighbourhood which has never been tried yet.

297. Is there plenty of timber—good available timber—available, say, for sleeper purposes in the district?—Yes. The timber at the Kumara alone would afford a good deal of traffic for the railway. I may just add that it is my firm opinion that a railway between Hokitika and Greymouth cannot be made a profitable investment without the proposed deviation to Kumara and other centres of population situated inland.