

119. Then what is the distance between Greatford and Foxton round by the present line?—It is $48\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

BULLS, FRIDAY, 12TH MARCH, 1880.

120. *Mr. Thomas Munro*, storekeeper, of Bulls, made the following statement to the Commission: The "rough estimate of cost of four miles of railway from Greatford to Bulls," and the "rough estimate of traffic between Greatford and Bulls," which have been furnished to the Commission, are fair statements according to the times at present. Some time ago there was more traffic than at present; but we thought it advisable to make it as low, in one sense, as we could, considering the times. The quantities are correct, as far as we could form an opinion. We had not exact figures to guide us; but I have been for a long time extensively engaged in business, and myself and a dozen other residents constructed those estimates. It is our unanimous judgment that those estimates are as correct as we could reasonably make them. Knowing the capabilities of the district, I have not the slightest doubt that the present traffic will be considerably increased so soon as the district is opened up by the railway—especially on the Sandon side. The Sandon people would, in the meantime, I have not the slightest doubt, make use of the proposed line between Greatford and Bulls; but in the estimates we have not taken credit for that, because they do not at present get their goods this way.

121. *Mr. Reid.*] Is not a gross return of £1,100 a very small sum from which to deduct wear and tear?—It is difficult to arrive at. Four miles of railway by itself would not pay, but in connection with another railway it would. We take the line from Greatford to Bulls (4 miles) in connection with the other line; but, if you separate those 4 miles from the other railway, the figures must necessarily be small. But, in connection with the other line, I maintain that the 4 miles of railway would pay.

122. You mean that people do not want to send goods merely to Greatford?—Yes. But, in connection with the whole line, the traffic would be larger, and would pay as a whole. A return of £1,100 certainly looks small for a railway, but we cannot really separate the 4 miles of proposed railway from the Wanganui-Foxton Railway.

123. *Colonel Pearce.*] How do the Sandon people get their goods now?—Some by Feilding, some by the Rangitikei River, some by Palmerston, and some small quantities by this way.

124. *Mr. Wright.*] Have you considered at all what would be the profitable return of the railway from Greatford to Bulls, after paying the working expenses of that section?—We have considered this: that, if the railway here is worked in a certain manner, the working expenses of the 4 miles of railway would be very small. That is to say, if Greatford Station is made the half-way station instead of Halcombe, the train would have to remain at Greatford for twenty minutes. During that interval the engine might come down with loaded trucks, and take them away. There would be no more detention than at present; and the line would be worked with the same engines and men as work the main line at present. It would only be necessary to have a man or two at this end to receive goods on arrival or departure. That would be the only way of working this line economically, and I have not the slightest doubt that in that way the line could be worked profitably, even with a revenue of only £1,100.

125. *Mr. Henry Sanson*, settler, of Sandon, made the following statement to the Commissioners: I have compiled a few facts with regard to the Sandon District which will perhaps guide the Commissioners. Sandon and Carnarvon districts comprise an area of more than 120,000 acres of good agricultural land, and contain a population of 1,500 souls. There was under cereal crops this year 3,000 acres, and the average yield was 25 bushels per acre: total, 150,000 bushels, or about 2,400 tons. There are about 500 tons of root crops. Over 1,000,000 feet of sawn timber are sent away annually from one mill alone. There are two sawmills in full work at present, and the erection of two others is contemplated. A very large number of cattle and sheep are annually sent away from these districts. The yield of produce is considerably on the increase every year, and this increase will be at a more rapid rate now that the Douglas special settlement is making such progress. This would yield a considerable traffic to the railway if the West Coast line were brought to Foxton. The Palmerston line comes out from Foxton for a distance of 6 miles in a direct line for Sanson. In addition to the above-mentioned farm and timber produce, there is an import traffic amounting to about 300 tons. The foregoing estimates will be at least doubled as soon as the Sanson-Carnarvon Junction branch line is completed, which we hope to see accomplished within a reasonable time. At the present time the Sandon District draws some of its supplies from Palmerston, and some through Bulls from Wanganui. I cannot say from which end it draws most of its supplies. I am a resident of Sandon District. I may say that between Sanson and Foxton there is a very large area of undeveloped country, which will remain for ever in its present state unless the line is brought to Foxton, so as to give us an outlet, and encourage the completion of the proposed branch line from Sanson to Carnarvon Junction. There are thousands of acres of really good land—second, I think, to none in New Zealand—languishing for want of a proper outlet. Parts of the country possessing railway transit have a great advantage over other places without railways; and we feel heavily handicapped for want of a railway. We are doing all we can in this direction to help ourselves, and have urged upon the Government, as we do now upon this Commission, that the line should be brought to Foxton, so as to give us access to Wellington, which we would not have if the railway went through the Gorge to Masterton. In the event of the line being made from Greatford to Bulls, I think that would increase the traffic between Sandon and Bulls, because it would bring the railway station so much nearer to Sandon; and, instead of getting our goods by way of Foxton, as at present, we would get them from Wanganui, through Greatford. There is a large tract of really very good land between the sea-coast and the foot of the hills from Foxton to Otaki.

126. *Colonel Gorton*, of the firm of Stevens and Gorton, land and stock agents, Bulls, made the following statement: The estimates which have been handed in to the Commission with regard to the railway from Greatford to Bulls were made up by eight or nine of the residents here. I went to the railway station myself and worked up the passenger, goods, and parcels traffic; and upon that I have made out my figures, allowing a slight increase, which we shall certainly gain by bringing the line to Bulls, because down in this direction there is a very large extent of country, both agricultural and grazing, the