

inadmissible. I should be sorry, by anything I might say, to induce the Commissioners to go over the routes themselves. It is quite unnecessary, as it would be easy to get statistics and information without travelling the route. These are engineering questions, but it seems to me that the League might assist the Commission very much by furnishing statistics in regard to the different routes that have been proposed.

*The Chairman* : That is exactly the information the Commission would desire to receive.

*Mr. Chrystall* : I understood you to say that the Commission could not report upon any line involving a deviation as far west as Reefton?

*The Chairman* : I cannot answer that question. We are bound by the terms of the Commission, and while feeling ourselves so bound we do not refuse to receive any information that may be tendered to us upon the subject of the West Coast line connecting with Canterbury. It must, I repeat, be clearly understood that the duty of reporting on the West Coast line is not within the four corners of our Commission at all, and that we have nothing to do with it. We are directed to report upon the best route for a main trunk line northwards.

*Mr. Richardson* : All the lines referred to directly or indirectly to-day are laid down in the various maps which are probably in your possession. It appears to me that if some one were appointed by the deputation to wait upon you and ascertain upon the maps which of the routes you would take into consideration, then they could get sufficient statistics to enable you to arrive at a just conclusion hereafter. It seems to me that that would be the best practical way of getting what you want, otherwise we should be working in the dark.

*The Chairman* : I think you are quite right, and the Commission would be glad to adopt that suggestion. We may be said now to have broken the ice of this inquiry, but the real work of collecting statistics, evidence, and such information as can be relied upon must be done by one or two persons. Our proceedings to-day are of a conversational character, each one endeavouring to arrive at the other's views, but the proper way of obtaining reliable information is that which has been suggested by Mr. Richardson.

*Mr. Richardson* : I might be allowed to ask you, on behalf of the deputation, to indicate what your movements will be—whether you will remain any length of time in Christchurch, or go away and return again.

*The Chairman* : If the deputation are prepared to give us the information we will remain as long as it is necessary to get it.

*Mr. Richardson* : The statistics and information with regard to any particular route to be inquired into can be readily obtained. The members of the deputation could probably put their fingers upon it if they only knew the direction you wished the information to go.

*The Chairman* : The particular information we should be glad to get would be with respect to the character of the country, and the difficulties of that particular line that would cross through the Cannibal Gorge and up by the route through the valley of the Maruia to the Tophouse, and thence to Nelson or down the Wairau Plains to Blenheim.

*Mr. Weston* : Would you like special information with regard to the other northern routes?

*The Chairman* : Yes.

*Mr. Reese* : Do we understand that any statistics or information we may give you in reference to the West Coast line would have some kind of report attached to it; or are we to gather this information without the hope of a report on the West Coast railway?

*The Chairman* : I do not know that we could report officially at all on the West Coast railway; but no harm would be done in giving us any information. We do not refuse to receive it; but we have no authority as to the West Coast railway at all.

*Mr. Richardson* : As far as this meeting to-day is concerned that is all we need trouble you with, and I have to thank you for the patient hearing which you have given us. No doubt the hints you have thrown out will be availed of, and a communication will reach you as to who has been appointed by the deputation or League to afford you all the information we can possibly give you on the matter.

The deputation then withdrew.

CHRISTCHURCH, WEDNESDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 1882.

The Commission met at 10 o'clock.

MR. HENRY BOGIE HUDDLESTON, Civil Engineer, examined.

49. *The Chairman*.] I understand you wish to give us evidence relative to the main trunk line of railway northwards?—Yes; my principal object in seeking an interview this morning was to afford some information upon the East Coast railway, on an alternative section of which I was engaged to report. I am very well acquainted with the district.

50. What do you call the East Coast line?—I call the East Coast proper anything that does not go by the West Coast. It is divided into what you may call three independent schemes at the present moment. There is the line starting at the Waipara by way of Cheviot Hills, Hawkswood, and on to Kaikoura. Then the constructed line to Waikari continued on to Waiiau, and thence by the Greenhills to Kaikoura. That is the East Coast proper. Then there is the line that the Nelson people are most anxious about—a divergence at the Waiiau, across the Hanmer Plains by the Clarence, the Acheron, over Tarndale, through the Wairau Gorge, and by the Tophouse to Nelson or Blenheim, as the case may be.

51. With which of these routes are you most familiar?—I am perfectly familiar with them all; but the one I wish to speak particularly about is the line by way of the Greenhills, and an alternative route joining Mr. Dobson's line by Fernyhurst. In carrying the line from the Red Post by way of the Greenhills there is a great difficulty in regard to the levels, otherwise the district is desirable as a country for settlement. A very large extent of country would be opened up by carrying the line that way to Kaikoura. To obviate the difficulty regarding the levels I explored two other alternative lines between the Waiiau Township and Kaikoura—one taking a route between the Monkey-Face Spurs and the Greenhills Station, which considerably reduces the summit level at that point. The