

25. *Mr. Fulton.*] On the map accompanying Mr. Foy's report of the 26th July, 1878, the railway line recommended passes through Waiau Township, over the Whale's Back to Kaikoura; can you say why that line was then recommended in preference to the one of which you are now speaking?—I can merely say that Mr. Foy was of opinion at that time that it was not possible to go along the coast. Mr. Carruthers spoke to me on the subject with special reference to the summit height on Mr. Foy's line of 1,500 feet, and I told him that I thought the line could be got along the coast with a summit level of not more than 500 feet. He then sent me to take a trial section, which I have just shown to the Commissioners, and the result of that was that, after four years' deliberation, the Government requested me to stake out that line, which I have done. Mr. Blair, before requesting me to stake it out, went over the coast line with Mr. Foy's report and mine in his hand, and examined the ground mile by mile.

26. *The Chairman.*] You were also engaged on the survey of the West Coast line?—Yes; I surveyed the line for the West Coast years ago.

27. On what part of the line were you employed?—I had the superintendence of the whole survey.

28. From where to where?—From the Weka Pass right to Hokitika. I conducted a series of railway surveys for railways over the whole of the Canterbury Province. The result is, I believe, in one of the offices in Wellington—a large atlas of maps showing the whole of the lines.

29. Over which of the passes on the range was your survey carried at that time?—Through the Hurunui Pass; I took barometer sections of all the passes south of the Hurunui.

30. With what view was that survey undertaken? Was it undertaken as part of the main trunk line, or as a special line to the West Coast?—It was undertaken as a special line to the West Coast at the time the gold fields broke out there. Mr. Moorhouse was very anxious indeed to get the line through.

31. It was not contemplated as forming any part of the trunk line from Canterbury northwards?—Not beyond Canterbury. I laid out the north line. An approximate survey of the West Coast line was a continuation of it.

32. A portion of that West Coast line would be a continuation of the trunk line?—Yes; of the northern line from the Hurunui.

33. *Mr. Thomson.*] What elevation did you go over to get to the West Coast?—Somewhere about 3,000 feet. I proposed to go over the Teremakau Saddle by a surface line with a summit grade of 1 in 15.

34. You could not go over with a grade of 1 in 50?—No; not without a very long tunnel. The best that you could get is 1 in 25 with a tunnel of two miles in length. But by a grade of 1 in 15 you went sidling up the valley so as to get over the Saddle without a tunnel. There is no real difficulty excepting that at the Saddle.

35. Where did the northern line that you laid off separate from the western line?—It did not separate. We did not go beyond the Hurunui, because they were all provincial surveys within the Province of Canterbury.

36. Did you consider at all the best route that the northern line should take?—Yes; I always considered the East Coast line as the only practicable line—that is to make a line that you can have payable traffic upon.

37. Did you not at all consider the line by Tardale and the Hammer Plains?—No; I did not consider it practicable for payable traffic—not such a line as would be worth making under the circumstances. I looked also at Arthur's Pass, but the difficulties were so great that I did not consider it at all available; I rejected it. A five-mile tunnel would be requisite up this Pass.

38. *The Chairman.*] Can you form an estimate of the traffic on the East Coast line?—No; that is a different thing altogether. I cannot see any present traffic on that line. There may be occasional traffic.

39. At present there appears no indication of it?—At present there is nothing whatever to make traffic. If the runholders would cut up their properties, both the country north of Cape Campbell and south of the Conway would carry a large population; but at present there is nothing but sheep.

40. The property of these runholders could be made much more valuable than it is by carrying a railway through the country?—Yes; very valuable indeed. I think that is shown by the fact that the moment the Government made the line up to the Waikari, Mr. Moore has made arrangements for cutting up the whole of the Waikari Estate, consisting of 12,000 acres, into farms consisting of from 50 to 150 acres each.

41. Can you give any idea of the increment of the value of the land from the fact of a railway being carried through it?—Mr. Moore's Omihī Flat and Mr. Robinson's Cheviot Estate might be so cut up that the flats and low downs would sell at from £12 to £18 per acre.

42. Is that possible?—Quite possible; it is magnificent land. There is plenty of room for sheep on the hill-sides, where there is good pasture. There are plenty of lovely flats capable of being cut into farms. It is magnificent country. A great part of the Hawkwood Estate is the same.

43. *Mr. Thomson.*] But independently of the profit which occurs to the runholders, does not a railway do good in this way: that economical laws come to bear upon them, and they are forced to cut up their land, and does that not do an immense deal of good to the colony in general by putting population on the land?—It would do a great deal of good in many ways. In the first place a great deal of valuable land would be brought into cultivation—land far superior to much of that which is being cultivated on the Canterbury Plains. It would establish a great number of thriving homesteads, and attract a very large and valuable population, and in course of time they would bring traffic to the railway.

44. Then, provided a through line, if required for colonial purposes, were to be made, there is no reason why, because the runholder gains a benefit by the railway, it should not go on?—Certainly not. If you had a hundred people with a hundred acres of land each, it would be considered an argument for going on with the railway.