

population now about the Rotherham Estate. I think the owners of the Culverden Estate might spare a few thousand acres for settlement with advantage to themselves. I also think that a good part of the Balmoral Estate might be sold for agricultural purposes.

152. Would they be willing to sell it?—I think they would be.

153. To small settlers?—Yes. There are certain persons who would not sell. I am quite willing to sell the whole of mine at a reasonable rate.

154. On what terms, not only as to price but conditions, are persons prepared to sell in the Amuri?—I think Wilkin and Davidson give good terms. They told me they wished to sell some of their land.

155. Have any portions of these properties been put up to auction at all?—Yes; the whole of the St. Leonards property was sold by auction some years ago.

156. In what way?—In blocks.

157. Of what size?—Of very large size, with the exception of the small settlement at Rotherham.

158. Then notwithstanding that the proprietors are prepared to sell, no settlement to any extent has taken place?—No.

159. For what reason?—Well I think that most of the people have withdrawn the land from sale.

160. Why?—I do not know.

161. Do you think it is because they are waiting for a railway to increase the value of it?—No; I do not think so.

162. Can you give us an idea of what the land in that district fetched per acre in the market?—I could not say. I heard that Mr. Moore, who is now cutting up the Waikari Flat, is asking from £10 to £15 an acre. Some land at Rotherham, on the Waiau, was lately sold at about £5 an acre.

163. Supposing the railway were constructed as far as the Red Post, to what extent would that increase the value of the land?—I do not think it would increase its value.

164. Then you think that that is a fair estimate of the value of the land throughout that district?—I think from £5 to £6 an acre is a fair estimate for the best agricultural land there. A great deal of the land is not worth more than £2 an acre, and some of it worth much less than that.

165. *The Chairman.*] Do you know anything of the condition of the country about Tarndale and from there to Tophouse during the snow-storm in 1867, the elevation being so much greater?—Yes.

166. What was the depth of snow in Tarndale?—No more than what I have stated. The snow-fall was 3 feet 6 inches all round, and reached Fernyhurst and Hawkeswood.

167. Were you in the Tarndale country last winter?—I was not there myself, but I was told by people who were there that the winter was exceedingly mild, and there was but little snow.

168. There is no year in which snow does not fall and lie for a considerable time?—No. We have got a little snow in all that part of the country. In Hanmer Plains there would be two or three falls of snow during most winters a few inches deep, but it would not be for a long time.

#### CHRISTCHURCH, THURSDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 1882.

The Commission met at 10 o'clock.

A deputation from the Railway League, consisting of the following gentlemen, waited upon the Commission: Messrs. E. Richardson, T. S. Weston, and W. Chrystall.

*Mr. Richardson:* Mr. Chairman, the deputation who have come here to-day have prepared a rough statement which Mr. Chrystall, the Chairman of the Railway League, will read to you. We can then ascertain whether there are any particular points in that statement which you wish to enlarge upon, or whether there is any other information which you desire to be furnished with. The preparation of this statement may be of service to the Commission, and perhaps save them some trouble.

*The Chairman:* We shall of course be very glad to hear the statement.

Mr. Chrystall read the following statement:—

The Hon. Dr. Pollen, Chairman of the Railway Commission *re* Extension of Middle Island Trunk Line.

SIR,—With reference to what passed at the interview that you were good enough to grant to a deputation from the Committee of the Canterbury Railway League on the 20th instant, the Committee of the League has now the honour to place before you the following figures representing the estimated annual revenue from traffic upon a railway that would connect Canterbury with the West Coast, and which may be fairly expected to accrue within the next three years, based on the present consumption of the various articles, viz.:—

	£
Timber, 12,000,000 feet at 4s. per 100 feet	24,000
Coal, 75,000 tons, at 12s. 6d. per ton...	46,875
Building stone...	3,000
Merchandise and agricultural produce, 20,000 tons, at average rate of 30s ..	30,000
Parcels	1,500
Sheep and pigs...	2,000
Cattle	2,000
Passengers	25,000
	£134,375

This estimate is based on an average distance of 176 miles. The whole of the traffic specified would result directly from communication with the West Coast, and in the opinion of the Committee the above-estimated earnings would amply justify an extension of the main trunk line as far west as Reefton, or to some point further south, if such were thought desirable; although such a deviation would render the so-called trunk line less direct, the Committee is convinced that the interests of the colony would be best served by such an extension as would connect the East and West Coasts.

*Timber.*—Annexed hereto is an extract from a report prepared by a Committee at Greymouth, giving detailed information as to the vast forests of various descriptions of useful timber existing on the West Coast, which information has been practically confirmed by a Commission that was appointed