

123. Have you any more information to give me?—No; except that, looking at the map, you would suppose that the present line would serve them, but the difficulty of crossing the river stands in the way, and the inferior part of the land in the district is in the southern portion. The best land is towards the middle and northern part of the district, although some of it is stony. The better land of the district is all in the immediate vicinity of the proposed extension; where you get near the bush the land is good.

124. Is it your opinion that the proposed extension would increase the traffic of the Tinwald line?—Yes.

125. The traffic is small?—Yes.

126. The traffic of the district does not appear to go down that line?—My brother is manager of a run in the back ranges, and his wool comes down, passes through the township, and goes to Methven, because there is no one at Anama to take charge of produce.

127. But that could be easily remedied?—Yes, but it is one of the reasons I give why the traffic is smaller than it would be. I would not run the risk of getting any goods or stores up by that line.

128. What is wanted, then?—A goods-shed, and some one to take charge of the produce.

129. If the line were taken over the present road-bridge would it be as serviceable as if it were taken along the line shown in green on the map?—As far as I see it would make no difference: it is merely a short cut; but it would serve the township and save the shifting of buildings, and money which has been expended in sections would not be sunk; it would be better in that way. Townships have been laid out in the neighbourhood of the hotel and sections purchased.

Mr. THOMAS ELRICH McRAE, examined.

130. *The Commissioner.*] Do you live in the district indicated on the map?—Yes.

131. And do you think that the extension shown on the map would be of service to you?—Yes; it would be of decided service to me, and to the district at large.

132. Do you not think that as much produce could be taken at present—to the present terminus?—No; because only one load can be taken at present in a day from the bush.

133. Does it not often happen that, when a load has been put on a dray, it does not matter whether it is taken an extra mile or two?—There is a carter named Jollie, who says it is as cheap to cart it to Ashburton as to take it to Anama.

134. Where is he living?—In the centre of the bush.

135. What is the distance which will enable him to make two trips a day?—I could not put it in mileage, as to what would be the distance.

136. It depends very much on the roads, does it not?—Yes. I know that they cannot do more than one load a day, and a long day at that. Jollie can take a load to Ashburton in a day, and sometimes get back-loading.

137. Do they always get back-loading?—Not always, but often.

138. Then, at present, it is the same thing to go by cart to Ashburton as by railway?—It does not make much difference, except to passengers.

139. And as to produce?—I do not think it makes much difference.

140. Then, if that were the case, it seems to be a great waste of money to make the railway as far as it has gone?—Well, if they brought it on to Bowyer's Stream it would be more useful, as the people there could compete profitably by sending coal and stone. No one would go to Ashburton by cart if the train came to Bowyer's Stream.

141. But the train has come twenty miles, and you say it makes no difference?—The reason is that the line goes towards the Rangitata. We cannot go straight to Anama from Alford Forest, but have to go over the bridge.

142. Then, do you think the new terminus at Cavendish Station, which is nearly completed, will make the difference?—It will make a great deal of difference: a difference of about two and three-quarters of a mile.

143. What direction do carts take produce from that district to Ashburton?—They go direct down the Forks, and there is no river to cross except Taylor's Stream, but if they go round by the bush there is a bridge over Taylor's Stream.

144. What is the quality of the land?—All the land between Taylor's Stream and Bowyer's Stream is very good for growing crops; but it will not pay, especially in oats, on account of the distance.

145. But there are many districts growing grain which are much farther from a railway terminus than this one you are speaking of—three times as far: how do you account for their producing their crops and sending them away?—I do not know. The land must be easier worked, or of better quality.

Mr. WILLIAM EDSON, examined.

146. *The Commissioner.*] Can you give me any information on this question?—where do you live?—About two miles lower down, on the Tramway Reserve, where the railway was originally intended to have been brought. I consider that the district has suffered a great injustice from the railway being taken on the south side of the river. It was originally intended to have been taken on the Tramway Reserve, and I and many others bought land on the strength of that, and the consequence has been that we have suffered very materially through it.

147. But the Tramway Reserve is not on the line as surveyed by Mr. Triphook?—It was originally intended to have come up the Forks, but it was diverted to the south side.

148. You bought on the supposition that the original proposal would be carried out?—Yes, and so did most here. One gentleman bought ten thousand acres of land, and he told me he was ruined, through the line not having been carried out.

149. Where is that land?—Buccleugh. Mr. Macfarlane and others can corroborate me in that.