

way League, attached to a letter sent to me in reply to a communication. The footnote was as follows: "We have tried to find out where that point is, but so far have failed. People here who know the country say if they knew that they could tell which route the line must eventually come." That letter containing the footnote was dated "Roxburgh, 20th November, 1900." We maintain that Parliament against the evidence submitted by us sanctioned the wrong route for this line of railway, and we would further point out that there has been no counter-petition to that presented by us. We ask you to stay the railway where it is until the question as to the Moa Flat route, which we advocate, is settled.

1. *Mr. Flatman.*] I understand you to say that you do not wish this six miles of railway to go on?—Yes; we oppose its being proceeded with strongly.

2. Until the Moa Flat is bought by the Government?—Yes, that is so. The petition sets out the position.

*Mr. Bennet:* I would like to make a short statement. The witness has said that there would be nothing in the way of traffic at Rae's Junction: well, perhaps witness would be surprised if I tell him that 600 tons of stuff and four teams were kept going that way every morning. If the witness wants evidence as to this I can give it.

*Witness:* Where is this evidence?

*Mr. Bennet:* There has been considerable settlement round about Rae's Junction, and many tons of coal a week are being put out.

*Witness:* I am not aware of this.

*Mr. Bennet:* In the interest of the people of Roxburgh I cannot help but refute the statements of the witness, Mr. Kerse. I say that there is a large area of land at almost a lower altitude than Dunrobin which would not be fed except by running through Miller's Flat. The witness has said that there has never been a petition in favour of the line *via* Eddievale. Would he be surprised when I tell him that he himself signed such a petition sixteen years ago? What has the witness to say to that, I ask?

*Witness:* I do not remember ever signing a petition so worded. Circumstances have altered, but I assert that what I am telling you as to the respective advantages in this matter is correct.

3. *Mr. G. W. Russell.*] The position you take up amounts to this: that you think the railway ought to go by way of the Moa Flat?—Yes; only if the estate is acquired.

4. Your object is to force the Government to purchase the Moa Flat Estate?—Not necessarily that.

5. Well, it seems to me that part 4 of your petition implies that; in your statement, too, you urged the desirability of opening the Moa Flat for settlement?—Yes, we urge that.

6. And the position you take up is that until the Moa Flat is purchased the proper thing is to make a railway a few miles and then wait for the estate to be purchased before finishing the line; Is that so?—Decidedly not. We say, as I have already said, that the people of Dunrobin and Eddievale have no complaint *re* railway accommodation, being only six to eight miles from Heriot Station. We say that by way of Eddievale practically only one family is benefited. There are only two or three other local people about Eddievale who would be slightly benefited, but there are many people close up to both sides of the proposed Eddievale terminus—lands adjoining, in fact—who sign against taking the line to Eddievale.

7. Is there as good land at Eddievale as at Moa Flat, do you think?—Yes, equally as good perhaps, but not as much.

8. What is the difference in the quantity?—I do not know; but it is easy to find that out if you have the map handy. The petition says there are 30,000 acres at Moa Flat, and I am prepared to back that up.

9. As far as I can understand, you ask the Government to go back on the legislation of 1890: you ask this Committee to recommend the Government to repeal the law in the Act of 1899 so that your wishes may be given effect to and another route selected?—Practically that is so?

10. *The Chairman.*] You want the Government to buy Moa Flat, and to make a railway through it?—That is the position.

11. Are you a farmer?—Yes, and I have been in the district about twenty-three years.

12. *Mr. Tanner.*] What did you mean when you said that £2,000 was spent on a survey?—I said that the £2,000 was to be expended on the making of the railway, not on a survey. The route had already been surveyed.

13. Where was that proviso to be found in any resolution of the House?—It is in *Hansard*. It was a statement to the effect that the £2,000 had been voted, but would not be expended unless land was acquired in the vicinity for settlement. The statement was made by the Minister for Public Works.

14. But there is other land for settlement about that part, is there not?—Not that I am aware of.

15. Is there any land fit for settlement in the whole district which might be served by the railway, whichever route was taken by it?—There may be some land, say, on the Teviot Station, but I am not acquainted with those parts so well.

16. Is Eddie's land fit for settlement?—Yes, certainly the greater part of it is; but that land is already settled, and only six miles from a railway-station.

17. And the route taken by the Government serves that land?—Yes.

18. *Mr. Blow* (Under-Secretary for Public Works).] What gave you the impression that the line would be taken in a direct course through Moa Flat?—Well, the people have been agitating for that for the last ten or twelve years, and the votes passed by the Government led the people to believe that this was to be the route.

19. You are aware that people in the colony often agitate for something which they do not get?—Perhaps so.