

20. Did the formation of a railway league at Roxburgh lead you to conclude that the line should be a direct one, and to ignore the possibility of any other route?—I am not aware that and one came to such a conclusion. I do not hold that conclusion myself.

21. But you are endeavouring to show that either a vast engineering mistake has been made or that the route has been diverted from its original line?—Yes, I say that is the position.

22. Why do you say that is the position?—Well, it is an actual fact.

23. How can there be a diversion when there has been no pledge given?—There has been an implied promise. The route was surveyed at the instigation of the people, and two votes were granted for it, the people believing all the time that the direct route was to be taken.

24. What is there in the Appropriation Act to lead you to suppose that it would be a direct line?—I have already stated what the people had been doing for years in the matter, and also what the Government had done.

25. But the Government never said the route was to be in a direct line to Roxburgh?—Perhaps not. The people did not find out for some time which way the line was going.

26. Do you mean to say that although there were two leagues at work you did not find out which way the line was going until trains were running?—That is hardly the position. We did not find out which route had been authorised.

27. *Mr. G. W. Russell.*] Has a survey ever been made for a railway through Moa Flat?—Yes.

*Mr. Blow:* That was only a trial survey.

28. *Mr. J. W. Thomson.*] When was that survey made?—I think about five or six years ago.

29. Is it not a fact that a trial survey was made before that?—Yes, twenty-three or twenty-five years ago.

30. You had reason to believe that if the line was made it would go that way?—Yes, we had every reason to believe so.

31. You have a good opinion of the Moa Flat Estate, and believe it is suitable for settlement?—Yes.

32. You think it so good, that the Government would be justified in purchasing it?—Yes.

33. Owing to the surveys made, and other things, led you to believe that, if the Government purchased this land, a railway to Roxburgh would run through it?—Yes.

34. And you believe that is the best thing that could be done?—It would be a blessing to the whole colony. It would be a payable line in every respect.

35. *Mr. Blow.*] Did I understand you to say that one reason which led you to assume that the line would be constructed by way of Moa Flat was that a trial survey had been made?—Yes, that was one reason.

36. Do you know that a survey of a very complete character was made as far as Eddie's?—Yes, but it was twenty-three or twenty-four years ago.

37. The better the survey, surely the better assumption?—The circumstances have very much altered.

38. Is the land of the Moa Flat more broken than the land about Eddie's?—I think it is scarcely so broken, if you mean the railway route.

39. Here is a plan of the section of the line to Eddie's: you will notice there are no tunnels, no bridges, no banks, and very few cuttings?—Yes, but that is only at Eddievale.

40. Now we deviate to the Moa Flat, and you see it is a great deal worse: yet you said that the Moa Flat was not quite so broken as Eddie's?—Yes, I think so, as far as the railway route is concerned.

41. Now, then, look at the plan again along the route you are advocating: here is a tunnel, here are banks of from 60 ft. to 90 ft., the 90 ft. cutting being one of the deepest in New Zealand; here, again, is a viaduct 90 ft. high, 600 ft. long, costing £17,000 or £25,000. All these are on the Moa Flat route. After seeing this plan do you change your opinion as to the respective merits of the two routes?—I think the comparison should be confined to the six miles and a half in question. You are putting the whole length of the line to Roxburgh as against a small section.

42. Then, as regards the quality of the land: I think you said the land at Eddie's was as good as that at Moa Flat?—I say there is land in the Moa Flat Estate equal to the land at Eddievale.

43. Is it as good as the land round Eddievale?—Not as a whole perhaps. Eddievale is mostly agricultural country.

44. You said something about the trade in fruit: is any fruit at all grown on the Moa Flat Estate?—I understand that some of the fruit-growers have leases on the top end of Moa Flat.

45. You cannot say from your own knowledge that any fruit is grown on the Moa Flat?—No, I cannot say that.

46. *The Chairman.*] You know the country about here?—Yes.

47. Is there a main road?—Yes.

48. Is it a fairly level road?—Yes, but only partly so. It is pretty level to Rae's Junction, being through a gorge; then there are some sharp rises.

49. But there are no big hills?—No; it is comparatively level all the way up the river.

49A. You said that the people down in your district knew that the Minister promised you this £2,000, and that the Moa Flat was to be purchased before going on with the railway?—He did not mention the Moa Flat Estate. Land for settlement in the vicinity was mentioned.

50. You said the people were not aware of the railway being authorised to Eddievale?—I never saw it in *Hansard* that it had been authorised to Eddievale. We were not aware of it until sixteen months afterwards.