

92. Well, now, that will stop all trade practically beyond Roxburgh. Anything for some distance beyond Roxburgh will be done by that way?—It will go *via* Roxburgh. This line should ultimately communicate and join with Alexandra, and the traffic will then go down and join with Lawrence through to Dunedin.

93. Once Alexandra is tapped by the Otago Central line you cannot expect that the Alexandra people are going to be favoured with a line through Lawrence as well. Do you not think, then, that the traffic will be diminished simply by the extension of the Otago Central line to Alexandra?—No doubt it will affect it to some extent, but at the present time it does not, because a lot of stuff goes round.

94. It does now, but that is only recently—since the line has been carried some distance up?—Yes.

95. Well, as regards the dredging, how long do you think it will be before the present system of dredging in worked out—I mean before the present claims are worked out?—I do not think the Molyneux River will ever be much what you call “worked out”; the old dredging claims are doing splendidly.

96. Are they not at the present time covering much the same ground by the operations with these large dredges that they used to do years ago?—Yes; but they are not working the ground at all. They are leaving more gold behind than they save.

97. Do you know much about the roads? Where do they get the metal from: is it shingle?—It is shingle out of the river-beds; sand and light gravel.

98. *The Chairman.*] I notice this petition is from Lawrence, and not from Roxburgh?—Well, sir, it is from the farmers and the miners throughout the district. They cut Tuapeka up into districts and took the petition round themselves. It was taken in hand by the farmers, and it was signed in very little over a week.

99. It is not signed in Roxburgh?—You have Coal Creek signatures there. You could hardly expect the Roxburgh people to throw themselves into this agitation at once.

100. Do the Roxburgh people favour this route or the Heriot route?—This route, certainly.

101. Last year they came here with a petition favouring the other route, and they have not signed this petition?—Well, of course, I speak from my own personal knowledge. I have had letters from the league up there, and they told me their policy would be to remain quiet and allow the petition to work out whatever was possible.

102. I think I would have taken an active part in supporting it if I had been them?—They considered that they might be stultifying themselves.

103. When the Otago Central line gets to Alexandra will it cut off the up-country traffic you refer to?—I do not think so. Of course, that is a remote possibility too. There is still a vast amount of traffic.

104. Do you think that the railway should stop at Roxburgh or continue on to Alexandra?—I think it should continue on to Alexandra.

105. With this line?—Yes.

106. Do you think there is sufficient traffic at Alexandra to warrant the country putting two railways through in the future?—In time.

107. You think there would be sufficient traffic to warrant the two lines being constructed to Alexandra?—Yes, in time.

108. Do you mean a thousand years hence or within a reasonable period?—When the population largely increases and time has been given to develop the country in various ways. I should not think it would take that time.

*Mr. Arbuckle:* With reference to the traffic on the road with the ten eight-horse teams, when giving my evidence I did not mean to convey that that was the whole of the traffic upon the road. For instance, they do not touch the coal trade at all.

*The Chairman:* I understood that from you.

*Mr. Arbuckle:* The coal traffic is a separate thing altogether.

Mr. J. BENNET examined.

*Mr. Bennet:* I should like to add something with regard to the wool trade. These gentlemen who have given evidence were asked about what quantity of wool would be likely to come from the stations. There is the Moa Flat Estate, from which there would be from 1,000 to 1,300 bales of wool.

109. *The Chairman.*] Which way does that wool go?—It would be taken through Teviot or Heriot.

110. You think this would divert it?—Yes, I am certain of that, and they would be thirty miles nearer from Dunedin. Well, there is Moa Flat, and Mount Benger is the name of another station, I think, which is just at Coal Creek. The next is Teviot Station, then Ormaglade and Beaumont Stations, and there are all the settlers around. There is a great deal of the country now put out in small agricultural leases. Nearly as much wool would come from the settlers as from these larger stations. With reference to the question asked by Mr. Sidey—viz., would not the traffic be diminished on account of the Otago Central line being completed—at the present time the Otago Central line is not only taking the traffic, but also that from Roxburgh, because the road has been in a bad state. The traffic has been going up twenty-eight miles from Alexandra rather than round from Roxburgh and Lawrence at the present time. I have been looking up the returns for Alexandra, and I think they will have a bearing on this Committee. The gold got was 3,330 oz.—that is, over twelve thousand pounds' worth of gold—and it is pretty well all coming out of that district: it is pretty well all from the Tuapeka electorate. That shows the importance of the railway, and that there must be an enormous quantity of traffic to keep that going. That has been kept up for months and months. Any gentleman in this room will observe the importance of that to the country at the present time. As regards the claims being worked out, dredging was