

26. None of those lands you mention are used for cropping except perhaps for their own use?—Only a small portion of Wilson Bros'.

27. Do you suggest that the line would be of any benefit at all to Wilson Bros.' property?—Yes, certainly.

28. It is much closer to Marton than the proposed line, is it not?—Part of it is as close. There is a road that runs out practically in a straight line from Bull's that would bring a large portion of very good land close to the railway.

29. How far is that [pointing out the part of Wilson Bros.' nearest to Marton] by road from Marton at present?—About six or seven miles.

30. Do you suggest, in view of the fact that it is within six or seven miles of Marton, that the construction of the line or extension of the tramway to Greatford is going to have the slightest effect so far as the subdivision of that estate is concerned?—Yes.

31. Well, why do they not subdivide now if they are within six miles of the railway?—They may not want to.

32. If the tram were extended, still they would not want to?—But it gives a better opportunity to subdivide. There would be a better demand. You cannot subdivide a place when there are no good means of communication to the market, and a small man has to be able to get at the markets not only one way but also the other.

33. But six miles is not far to a market?—No.

34. And no part of Wilson's, McKelvie's, Dalrymple's, or Fraser's property would be touched by this proposed tramway?—No. The only way it would affect it is that it would bring it four miles nearer.

35. It would not bring Wilson's nearer, would it?—Yes, a good part of it.

36. Do you mean to say that Bull's would be nearer by four miles to Wilson's than at present?—Four miles nearer to the railway.

37. Then I take it the position is this: that all those large landowners could, if they desired, efficiently subdivide and sell their properties to-day if they wanted to?—Yes.

38. But they do not want to do so if they can help it?—I do not know.

39. If they can get the line extended and so get another £2 or £3 per acre they may be induced to consider it?—It is always a consideration.

40. *Mr. Luckie.*] In your opinion the extension of the tram-line would be an advantage to the Dalrymple Estate. Would you be willing to agree to that area being included in a special-rating area for the purpose of financing the loan required to pay for the proposed extension if permission were given to make the extension?—Yes.

41. And a deviation of the Main Trunk line in the direction indicated through Foxton and Levin would be of great advantage to all the people in the neighbourhood for the purpose of getting their wool and other produce away?—Yes.

42. And they would pay less freight?—Yes.

43. Where do you send wool at the present time?—It goes to Foxton via Pukenui, and is then shipped to Wellington.

44. And how do you get your coal and other supplies in?—They are generally carted from Greatford in horse-wagons.

FRED PURNELL SWORN and examined. (No. 25.)

1. *Mr. Skerrett.*] What are you?—A grain-merchant residing at Marton Junction.

2. And I think you are managing director for Wilson and Co. (Limited), who carry on an extensive business as grain-merchants in Marton?—Yes, with branches on the Main Trunk line.

3. The turnover of your company is pretty considerable in grain and produce?—Yes. We specialize particularly in chaff.

4. Previously, I think, you were County Clerk to the Manawatu County?—Yes.

5. And manager of the Sandon Tramway?—Yes, that is so.

6. Over what period of years was that?—About ten years.

7. Have you, in addition, had any farming experience?—Yes, we are also farming in Marton.

8. You are therefore thoroughly acquainted with the Sandon district and with the conditions of Marton for produce in and about Marton?—Yes, that is so.

9. You know that for many years the Manawatu County have been endeavouring to secure permission to extend the tramway to Marton and to junction it to the Government line?—Yes, since about 1898.

10. In your opinion, would that be beneficial to the Sandon district, and would it open new markets for their produce?—Yes, decidedly so.

11. Do you mind stating in your own words your reasons for that opinion, first of all, considering the character of the new market?—Well, the main point is that the upper and lower districts are eminently suited for the extension of the traffic which the other district does not possess, and *vice versa*. That is very largely so in regard to grain and sheep. There is a mutual exchange of sheep. For instance, the young ewes are sent up into the higher district and the hoggets are sold every year. The ewes are sent from the upper district to be bred from in the lower and less hilly country at four and five years of age. There is a mutual exchange of traffic going on the whole time.

12. So that the upper district supplies stock which is to be fattened?—Yes, and also for breeding purposes.