

191. *Mr. Thomson.*] With reference to a previous question, I find that the distance from Westport to Christchurch is 190 miles, and to Greymouth 150 miles. Can you give us any information regarding the cost of freight of coal from Westport and Greymouth to Christchurch?—The present tariff rate would be—150 miles, 11s. 10d. per ton; and 190 miles, 13s. 2d.

192. Supposing you could get from Wellington to Cape Campbell in three hours and then take express train from Cape Campbell to Christchurch, a distance of about 170 miles, do you think this would be preferred by passengers?—My experience as to travelling by sea and land is this: that business men will invariably take the steamer in preference to the train, because they save a day. They travel by steamer all night, and arrive at their destination in the morning ready for business. I think it is a moot question whether or not persons travelling with families would go through the trouble of transferring their families and luggage from the steamer into the train in order to save so short a time as would be saved under the circumstances, especially taking into consideration that the Union Company, with their usual enterprise, would have a boat running probably as fast as the combined service.

193. Are you aware that the train between Dunedin and Christchurch is largely availed of by the travelling public?—Yes, it is used to a large extent by local passengers.

194. But not by through-passengers?—Yes; there are a certain number of through-passengers. The total bookings from Christchurch, which is the principal station, average $6\frac{1}{2}$ passengers a day to Dunedin.

195. But in the case of persons travelling with their families for pleasure, would they not prefer having only three hours of sickness to seventeen hours?—I think we should all prefer the three hours' sickness, but I would certainly prefer going by the steamer.

196. Are you acquainted with the route between Paris and London?—Yes.

197. Are you aware that generally the English public prefer the short route by Calais to the long route by Rouen or Southampton?—The shortest route is the favourite one I believe.

198. Would it not be much the same case in New Zealand were there a perfect railway system, such as we have between Christchurch and Dunedin?—That might alter the case.

199. Would not similar motives actuate the people of New Zealand as influence the public of England and France in preferring the shorter route?—Yes; to a great extent, but at the same time we have a different class of travelling public here from what there is in London and Paris. The question as to what the steamers would charge under the circumstances from Wellington to Lyttelton would have to be considered. The railway fare would be £2.

200. Then you are candidly of opinion that shortening the sea voyage across the strait would not much matter?—I think the number of people travelling would be so small that it would not be worth the expense. Those who could afford the time would no doubt travel by the pleasanter route.

201. Which is the pleasanter route?—If there was a comfortable railway service I should like to travel overland if I had not the trouble of transferring luggage and children, so as to see the country, but if travelling on business I expect the steamer would offer the greatest facilities.

202. Are you of opinion that the local traffic in goods and passengers between Blenheim, Kaikoura, and Christchurch would give an addition to the earnings of the railway?—I think the addition would be infinitesimal, because if you take timber from these you simply deprive some other portion of the railway of the revenue.

203. Have you been over the Amuri country at all?—No.

204. You do not know whether it is a fertile district or not?—Only by hearsay.

205. You cannot give any calculation of the produce of that district?—I think it is to be obtained from the agricultural statistics.

206. *Mr. Fulton.*] Can you tell us from what port Kaikoura is supplied principally?—I think it is principally supplied from Wellington.

207. Have you any means of comparing the passenger traffic between Christchurch and Dunedin by rail and by sea?—It is very difficult to ascertain. The passengers do not always book here; they go on board and book afterwards.

208. Do many people go by train from Dunedin to Christchurch, and then take the steamer?—There are generally one or two passengers in every boat.

Mr. JOHN INGLIS, Merchant, examined.

209. *The Chairman.*] We have been informed that you would be able to give us some information with respect to those lines about which we are inquiring?—Yes.

210. Which of the routes do you know best?—I do not know anything about the East Coast except from hearsay.

211. You are familiar with what is called the Central line?—I only know the Central route as far as the Clarence over Jollie's Pass, but no further; not up the River Acheron. I know the country up to the head waters of the Clarence and Waiau Rivers to the lower end of the Ada River, a little way up the Henry River, and thence down the Waiau. The Ada and Henry Rivers run into the Waiau.

212. What is the character of the country?—It is pastoral land. Of course there may be small patches of land here and there that could be cultivated, but it is of limited extent.

213. There is no large extent of what is called agricultural land?—No.

214. What is the character of the soil? is it limestone?—There is no limestone, as far as I am aware.

215. Have you any idea of the present production of wool in that district?—I can hardly venture to say from memory. From the Red Post towards the Hanmer Plains there would be wool from 180,000 sheep, or, say, 2,000 bales of wool yearly.

216. How does that wool find its way to market now?—The whole of it is carted to the Waikari by drays. The quantity named does not represent the whole of the wool from the Amuri District, but only that towards the Hanmer Plains.

217. Have you any idea of the population of the district?—I have no idea; it is certainly not large.