

767. If he has not got access it is of no use his working?—Not a bit.

768. You consider that a necessity for the working of the land at Tarndale is a railway?—Yes; dray traffic is too expensive to pay.

769. In fact a railway is an absolute necessity to getting this land cultivated?—Yes.

770. Have you seen the present Tarndale Station?—No; I know where it is.

771. You have not seen the crops grow there?—No.

772. You have no experience of them?—No; not at that place.

773. *Mr. Fulton.*] Can you give us the names of those gullies which are three-quarters of a mile wide and nine miles long?—There are the Yarrow, Five-Mile Creek, Cat Gully, Guide Valley, Molesworth, Wairau. There are many more, but I cannot remember their names.

774. Do you know the difference of the altitude between Mr. Carter's place and Tarndale?—It is not a great deal of difference.

775. Is it 1,000 feet?—I could hardly tell you. It is considered thirty miles from one place to the other.

776. *Mr. Fell.*] I understand you to say generally that that which hinders settlement is the want of a market?—The want of access to a market.

777. Supposing a market were brought to it, would that answer well?—Yes.

778. At present the only market is at a distance?—There is no market within a hundred miles.

779. If a payable gold field were discovered there, would the country be settled then?—Yes.

780. That would be as good as bringing it within reach of Nelson by rail?—Yes.

NELSON, WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER.

The Commission met at 10 o'clock a.m.

Mr. W. T. L. TRAYERS, Wellington, examined.

Witness made the following statement: I have been for many years intimately acquainted with the country lying between the Tophouse and Christchurch. I may say that I was the first European who ever passed through the gorge of the Wairau. Mr. Weld, who preceded me by a few days in exploring this country, had crossed the hills, so as to establish the connection between Tarndale and the country at the head of the Awatere. It will be observed that the valley of the Wairau, from the Tophouse to the gorge, lies very nearly north and south. I think there is a slight trend to the eastward, the effect being that that valley receives the sun on each side. As you have gone over the ground, it is unnecessary for me to say that there is no rise to overcome between the Tophouse and Tarndale. The whole line presents merely the average rise of a New Zealand river, which I estimated, at the time I first explored it, as about 30 feet to the mile, giving an altitude to Tarndale of from 2,800 to 3,000 feet. The surveyed line, I understand, passes into and down the valley of the Acheron to its junction with the Clarence. There is another line of route which I think has not been examined, but which I believe to be more advantageous than the one indicated in the reports. The line I refer to would run up the Wairau River after it passed through the gorge, to a small valley called the Island Valley, about four miles from Tarndale; it would pass up the Island Valley, cross a low saddle into the Clarence, and then pass down the Clarence River to some point from which it could descend into the Hanmer Plains; whether at the Hossack Saddle or higher up the valley of the Clarence would have to be determined by engineering examination. My own belief is that the line would be considerably shortened by being taken by that route. [Witness pointed out on the map the direction of the route referred to.] It would avoid a large amount of side-cutting in the Acheron Valley, and the construction of a heavy bridge across the Clarence River. I do not think that line has ever been examined, but I feel satisfied that it would prove a better line than the one already laid off; and, moreover, would enable a projected line to the West Coast, up the Hope branch of the Waiau, to be brought into more direct communication with the main line. I had a station at Lake Guyon, on the Waiau River, which I occupied for several years. Lake Guyon is about 800 feet below Tarndale. We cultivated at Lake Guyon a large variety of European fruits of various kinds, and every description of vegetable which is ordinarily cultivated in gardens here; and they all grew not merely in profusion, but with a luxuriance which you do not find in warmer situations. Wheat, oats, and barley, and English grasses, especially the red clover, grew with very great luxuriance. I may state also that a Mr. Fowler, who occupied land within a mile and a half of my own station, but nearly 200 feet higher, had, and I believe still has, a garden which grows fruits and vegetables of all kinds with the greatest possible luxuriance. I have no knowledge that any attempts have been made to cultivate at Tarndale; but, from my knowledge of the climate of the whole of the district between the Tophouse and the Hanmer Plains, I have no doubt that all kinds of fruits and cereals would grow luxuriantly. I believe the climate to be similar to that of a large part of England, and that it has no more snow than is to be found usually in many of the eastern parts of England, the climate indeed being such as might be expected from its altitude in the latitude in which it is situated. It is some 10 or 11 degrees lower in latitude than the corresponding situation in England, and in my opinion the climate is affected by the altitude of the country only to the same extent as that of the eastern counties of England by reason of their latitude of from 52 to 54 degrees. I have travelled through that country for nine or ten years in all seasons of the year, and have never found any obstruction whatsoever from the snow, although I have travelled through snow there. Nor is there anything, in my opinion, to deter people from settling in the district. The area of land available for actual culture is not large, but the area available for pastoral purposes is very extensive. The valley of the Waiau, to the westward of the Clarence, contains a considerable area—several thousands of acres of excellent land available for culture, and the hills intervening between it and the Clarence, and the block of hills to the eastward of the Clarence, are capable of carrying, and do carry, a very large quantity of sheep and cattle. I have travelled recently through the West Coast, and I made special inquiries with regard to the character of the country to the eastward of the line of road from Hokitika to Reefton. From personal observation I am satisfied that there is a very large area of land