

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

The Commissioner arrived at Mount Somers on Saturday night, 19th January, 1884, and on Monday, the 21st, rode over the country between the Rangitata and South Ashburton Rivers.

On Tuesday, the 22nd January, he held a meeting at 10.30 a.m., at the Mount Somers Road Board Office, for the purpose of hearing evidence, notifications of the times and places appointed for receiving evidence having been duly given by advertisement. The evidence closed at 1.30, and the Commissioner then drove with the Chairman of the Road Board over the northern part of the district.

On Wednesday, the 23rd, the Commissioner rode over the district towards Alford Forest and the north branch of the Ashburton, and by way of the forks of Taylor's and Bowyer's Creeks.

On Thursday, the 24th, he drove down the forks of the Ashburton to Ashburton Town.

On Friday, the 25th, interviewed the member of the House of Representatives for this district and the Mayor at 6.50 p.m., taking evidence at the County Council Chambers.

On Saturday, the 26th, took further evidence at the Council Chambers, returning to Christchurch in the evening.

On Monday, the 28th, took the evidence of Mr. C. Percy Cox at Christchurch.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 22ND JANUARY, 1884.

Mr. ALFRED EDWARD PEACHE examined.

1. *The Commissioner.*] You are Chairman of the Mount Somers Road Board?—Yes.

2. I wish you would kindly explain to me the objects aimed at in this part of the country, for I am not acquainted with the subject of this inquiry beyond the fact that there is an extension of the line in dispute. The Commission only directs that I should inquire into the objects and the wants of those resident in the neighbourhood, and I shall endeavour to do this by taking evidence. Will you explain what you know about it?—From the very first it was always intended that the line should come to Mount Somers. There was a railway reserve to the township. The railway was not commenced by the Provincial Council of Canterbury, but a vote of £10,000 was passed by the Provincial Council for the Mount Somers Railway-line. The terminus was then intended to be at the Mount Somers Township.

3. What was next done in the matter: the line was subsequently made by the General Government, was it not?—The line as surveyed by Mr. Triphook came to within three miles of the township. It crossed the South Ashburton River lower down than the present Anama Station. Mr. Wright roughly laid off the direction of the line for Mr. Triphook.

4. Who was Mr. Triphook engaged by?—To the best of my belief he was engaged by the General Government, and he surveyed the line that was recommended by the Ashburton County Council. I was not aware that we were going into the past history of the question or I should have come prepared.

5. I only want to go into the past so far as it is necessary to clear my own mind on the subject. You need not be very circumstantial in the matter, but state generally the object sought when the line was proposed to be made?—When the Royal Commission was appointed two or three years ago, to report generally on the railways in the South Island, they recommended that this line should be carried out.

6. Did the Royal Commission recommend any particular route, or was the line already built?—I think the question of route arose after the Royal Commission had reported. Mr. Triphook's survey was at that time the only survey, and we concluded that that would be the route the line would take.

7. Where did Mr. Triphook's line go?—It crossed the south branch of the Ashburton River about six miles below the present traffic bridge, in the neighbourhood of Rural Section No. 26964. He indicated the terminus in Rural Section No. 29573.

8. Do you say this from report, or have you seen his plans?—I have seen his pegs and also his plans.

9. Were these plans acted on at all: in fact, was the present line part of the line shown on these plans?—I think a very small portion was on his plans. The change was made without the knowledge of any one in the district, and it was not until the work was commenced that we knew of any change in the route.

10. Then the change you speak of consisted in leaving the line on one side of the river, and not extending it across: that is, it was left short of the original proposal?—It was carried beyond the point originally proposed by Mr. Triphook, but kept on the south side of the river.

11. Will you explain your reasons for objecting to the line staying on the south bank?—Before we go into that question I should like to know how we stand at present. I believe that during the last session £11,000 was voted for the extension of the Tinwald-Mount Somers line. I understand that £6,000 has been expended up to the Cavendish Station at the present terminus of the line, and that about £9,000 is still to the credit for the extension of this line.

12. That is a vote of the Parliament for this purpose?—Out of the £15,000 allotted from the three-million loan, £6,000 has been expended. I think it would be convenient if we understood