

180. It was given in evidence that the timber was not for shipment, but for local consumption in the neighbourhood?—Yes, chiefly.

181. And that the passenger traffic is principally to the Ashburton?—Yes, to some extent: we do all our business right through.

182. Is there much traffic to be got by extending the line on the south side of the river?—No; I would not go one yard beyond where it is at present.

183. Do you consider that there are two proposals as understood by the residents to be in dispute?—No.

184. Has there been a survey of the line crossing the river?—I believe that both have been surveyed. There was also a survey up to the Gorge of the South Ashburton, but I was against that in any shape or form.

185. Then you are of opinion that the line as shown on the south side of the river is not wanted?—Decidedly; because I think it would be a great mistake to have the two railways, that and the one by Methven.

186. But I refer to the extension up the south side. Do you think that is wanted?—No; it would not pay.

187. Is there any land in the neighbourhood that would be benefited?—No, not very much, except that the head of the Rangitata would be served to some extent, but the line as it is at present suits them.

188. Where would traffic coming from places further to the south reach this railway?—At the present terminus.

189. Then such traffic would not be helped by the south extension?—No.

190. There are various minerals which it is thought would be benefited by the extension—coal and limestone?—I think the present line is quite as near the coal and limestone as the extension would be. It would make a great difference if there were a bridge.

191. Do you send any of your produce away by cart?—No; all by train.

192. We had it in evidence that it was a matter of indifference whether it was carted to Ashburton or sent by rail. Can you understand that, after bringing the railway twenty-three miles?—No, I cannot understand it.

193. Then, do you think that extending the railway a few miles further would make any difference in creating a railway traffic?—No, I do not.

194. Would bridging the river make any difference?—The high terraces on the lower part of the river prevent access to the river further down. The high terrace extends the whole way down to opposite Valetta.

195. Is there any good land to the south of Mount Somers Township?—Yes.

196. To the south-west—I mean towards the Rangitata River?—Yes, very good land. It is expensive land to work: it is stony, but very rich soil. It is not in any way affected by the railway extension.

197. What distance were the crops I saw yesterday from the railway-station?—About eight or nine miles.

198. Do they cart that distance?—Hitherto they have carted down to Valetta, on account of the road not being metalled; but the road is, I see, now being metalled, and when that is completed the distance will be about eight miles, mostly down hill.

199. Is the land at the back of the Gawlor Downs good land and fit for agriculture?—Yes, all of it.

200. Is there much of it?—Between the two branches of the Hinds about 6,000 acres; but this extension does not affect any of the land in that direction.

201. How would produce from that part of the country get to market?—It would go to the Cavendish Station.

202. Would it be a good road, or rough?—Tolerably good.

203. No rivers to cross?—No, only the Hinds.

204. Suppose that the line were extended along the south side of the south branch of the Ashburton, do you think that the area indicated on the map in blue would be a fair estimate of the extent of country that would be benefited?—I think so; but the district would be rather smaller, as the southern boundary would be really "The Brothers" Ridge.

205. Then the extension on the southern side of the river runs into a mountainous district?—Yes, mountainous country; and none of the land there will ever be cultivated. I consider that if the line were extended on the south side it would only be for the benefit of minerals; but, as I said before, I am strongly opposed to any extension.

Mr. DUGALD MACFARLANE, re-examined.

206. *The Commissioner.*] You wish to supplement your former evidence?—I should like to make a further statement. I think there is no doubt that, if the Methven line were continued through and made an entire loop-line, the bulk of the produce would go to Christchurch, and that very little would go by the Tinwald line. Every ton of our wool and grain would go by Methven, I am certain of that, because we should save something like eighteen miles; but general traffic, I mean passengers and small parcels, would go by Tinwald.

207. Then, you think the business would be split up into parcels' traffic and traffic of goods for export, the one to go by Tinwald and the other by Methven?—Yes, and I suppose there would be ten people who would go to Ashburton for one who would go to Christchurch.

Mr. ALFRED EDWARD PEACHE, re-examined.

208. *Witness.* I wish to say that the inquiry appears to me to have drifted into a discussion on the merits of the extension of the Methven line rather than of the Tinwald—Anama—Mount Somers.