

the connection between Nelson and the rest of the South Island, is another important feature to be taken into account.

10. Do you say that the making of the railway to Motueka would mean a line through one of the best portions of the country to be opened up, or one of the worst?—There is no country to be opened up practically between Belgrove—that is, between the hill on one side and the hill on the other. You must remember the line—the Government line—after leaving Belgrove ascends the hill practically at once. It enters the tunnel and winds through some gullies on the other side of that range—the drift range—that is all really of very little value.

11. Is that not the country most settled now?—No; there may be one or two people, but practically no settlement.

12. If that is so, how do you say the Railway Commissioners have not given a fair estimate of traffic, that is if there is no settlement there, no population, and no land opened up?—I say it is, because, unless it is defined where the station is to be on the Motueka Valley side, it is an utter impossibility for any man to give an estimate of the traffic. As you are probably aware, immediately you get into the Motueka Valley proper and over the Motueka-Motupiko cart-bridge, you are at the mouth of the Motupiko Valley, which contains a deal of rich land. Two or three miles below that is the Tadmor Valley, twenty miles in length, containing good land. I have seen hops growing there, and that is an indication of good land. And even on the road between that and the next valley lower down, the Sherry Valley, where blue marl is exposed in the cuttings, an indication of coal, I have seen gold miners at work at the very summit of the hill. If the station is in an inconvenient place it makes all the difference. I want to point out that the settlers further down the Motueka Valley may take another road towards the present Government railway. In the matter of putting produce into a wagon it may make very little difference whether they ascend the hill or whether they leave it at the station on the other side.

13. *Mr. Wilson.*] With regard to the traffic which you say comes down from Tadmor and Sherry Valley, do you say it is as simple for settlers to cart their produce into Nelson as it is to cart it to the foot of Norris's Gully and take the train after?—No, I do not say that. I say it depends largely upon where the station is, and that it might be more easy for the settlers, we will say at Tadmor Valley, to take the more gradual ascent up the other hill and get into Belgrove, than to go away up the valley along a bad road.

14. You perhaps do not know where the proposed station shall be. It is proposed to be at the junction of Norris's Gully and Motueka Valley. Is there a main road which runs up the Motueka Valley and which practically taps the Tadmor?—It goes up.

15. Very well. There are the Sherry, the Baton, the Tadmor, the Motupiko, and Clark's; that road really serves all these valleys, does it not?—No.

16. It does serve these valleys, does it not?—There is a road by which you can reach all these valleys.

17. Is not one of the great obstructions to traffic between Nelson and the Motueka Valley the road over Spooner's Range?—Undoubtedly.

18. Would the railway, as proposed to be extended to the foot of Norris's Gully, obviate the necessity of carting over that range at all?—It might. But, as I have tried to point out, it would be a question of convenience. The settlers could cart over the hill by using the other road lower down the valley. There is a road over Spooner's Range lower down the valley. They could ascend in that way.

19. In your opinion, it is not necessary to have a railway into the Motueka Valley at all?—I do not say that. I say it is to be considered only in the way I have spoken of. It will not serve the whole of the valleys there; and the point you have mentioned, you must remember, is a little distance from any settlement.

20. It is close to the settlement of the Motueka Valley itself—that is, Brommell's?—I suppose it is half a mile from Brommell's, and you cannot call that a village.

21. Is there any other village close to it?—Yes, the Motupiko, and the Tadmor, a little lower down the river.

22. You mentioned just now the mineral resources of the Buller Valley, and you mentioned the Owen. Will you kindly give the Committee something of the probability of profitable undertakings at present being worked in the Buller Valley, or Owen?—No, I do not know that it would be possible to get a statement showing the value of the properties profitably working.

23. It is not a fact that the Owen Valley was supposed to be the richest gold-bearing part of the district?—Excuse me, it was not ever supposed to be the richest district. Certain reefs were found; but these reefs, so far as tested, did not contain a very large quantity of gold.

24. But were they a failure?—That has not been properly tested.

25. It cost me £50, at any rate?—Yes; and it cost Nelson people a great deal more than that.

26. *Mr. Saunders.*] Do you know the altitude of the Maruia Plain?—I think I had better not answer that question. It is easily ascertained by reference to the map. I have told the Committee I have not actually been there. I could give the altitude of a good many of these places, but of that I could not.

Mr. JOHN GRAHAM examined.

27. *The Chairman.*] What position do you occupy in regard to local matters?—I happen at present to occupy the position of Chairman of the Town District School Committee. I am also a member of the Borough Council of Nelson, and I am a Justice of the Peace of the colony.

28. Will you make a statement of what you think should be done?—I take it it would only be wasting the time of the Committee, and for no purpose, to go into details as to the quality of the land, the kind of country, the minerals, or anything of that kind through which the railway—not the proposed railway, but the railway to be constructed under the contract—is to go. We believe that question really was decided long ago. The company, for itself, before entering into the contract, made itself, through its promoters, aware of the nature of the country. They expressed themselves at the time as being satisfied with the conditions of the country offered them. It is now stated that the Nelson end of the country is not sufficiently good to warrant the com-