

thousand new selectors of an area of 200,000 acres, as shown by Mr. Humphries. In Westland, 760 selectors and 88,000 acres, as shown by Mr. Mueller. All this land out of the 6,000,000 acres is good—suitable for close settlement, and eagerly sought for. The loss in actual rents is: Nelson, £30,000; Westland, £23,100: or a total of £53,100. But what does the colony as a whole lose by having this 300,000 acres lying waste, instead of improved and settled for fourteen years, or, say, 150,000 for seven years; not only in Customs and trade from the settlers, but in the value of the colonial estate? Mr. Humphries says the 200,000 acres would have been increased in value to £600,000 from £90,000. The 88,000 acres, on the same ratio, would be increased to £250,000 from £80,000. Therefore we have to-day an estate worth £180,000 in these properties which should be worth £850,000. Surely it is no exaggeration to put the loss to the colony on this head alone at £200,000, or, adding the cash loss of revenue, at £250,000. (b.) Then, as Mr. Humphries points out, you have a further item to take into account in the "loss to come" by starting settlement of these lands fifteen years later than it should have been. He puts this at £200,000 for Nelson alone, but I will assume only £100,000 for both Nelson and Westland. (c.) Then there is the loss of settlers and diminution of population by reason of the younger men having been driven away from both districts. A moderate estimate of the damage and loss thus suffered is £5,000 per annum, or £75,000. (d.) On local bodies and districts, through non-settlement, want of rateable lands, loss of "thirds," say £5,000 per annum, £75,000. This estimate of the damage under some only of the heads under part (1) amounts to: Rents, £50,000; loss of improved value, £200,000; future loss on this head, £100,000; loss of population, £75,000; loss to local bodies, £75,000: total, £500,000. This is all on the assumption that no railway is to be made.

(2.) But by far the more serious loss is incurred through the non-construction of the railway. It would have benefited the whole population of Canterbury, Nelson, and Westland, made the conditions of life better and easier for every man, woman, and child, created trade and traffic, and greatly promoted settlement. It would have revolutionised the coal trade and the timber trade; immensely increased the population of the Coast and the population of Canterbury, which would manufacture for and supply the Coast; would have increased the gold output; would have created a new tourist traffic. The population of Canterbury and Nelson is 200,000. Surely those who say only 100,000 persons would be better off by £1 each per annum by having the railway—would pay, say, £1 a year more rent for a house if the railway were there—are understating it and not overstating it. Yet £1 per annum for the 100,000 persons is £1,000,000 for the ten years, since we have a further five years from 1895 to look forward to before the lines can be completed. What were all the people agitating for in 1884—for something that was not worth £1 per head per annum to them? I submit that the 15,000 people in Westland alone would be more than £5 per head per annum better off if the railway were made. It cannot be estimated exactly in figures, but it is easy to see what it must exceed. I put it that the evidence is just and correct which states the loss of convenience and comfort to the population, of trade, of Customs, of increased rateable values, of timber and coal development, of development of the mining industry, of tourist traffic, at a sum of at least two millions. Very nearly the same result would be arrived at if the estimate be taken only on the loss of trade in timber and coal, loss of gold output, and prices of supplies to each head of population in Westland. Even if the whole important item of public convenience to every individual be omitted, it is safe to say that the populations of Westland and Canterbury would be actually better off in pocket and profit to the extent of £150,000 per annum if the railway were made. The item of public convenience must not, however, be omitted. It is as if the Union Company contracted to run boats of 3,000 tons to Sydney and ran sailing-ships instead. They might charge the same price for a passage, but would they not be liable in heavy damages? Or, again, it is as if A contracts to build for B a house, with stoves and baths and other comforts, at a large cost, and, instead, puts him up a comfortless hut at a small cost. Would it be an answer to B's claim for damages if A pointed out that B could really live as cheaply in the hut, and was no worse off in his earning-power at his office? The Committee have before them the manifest proof of the immense impetus given to trade, population, and prosperity by the construction of such a railway in the official figures of the results to the Wellington District of the Manawatu Railway. The population of Palmerston quintupled and of Wellington doubled; the rateable value of Horowhenua County increased from £260,000 to £1,900,000, the rateable value of Wellington from £4,000,000 to £8,000,000. These are only a few figures from that return, and in Wellington we all feel we owe the increase chiefly to the construction of the Manawatu Railway, a railway which, the Royal Commission reported, could not pay, and which, like this, was committed to private enterprise under the Act of 1881.

(3.) Loss of profits to the Government railways, as estimated by Mr. Ronayne, £120,000. Thus I submit to the Committee, as demonstrated, a total of nearly £3,000,000 as a moderate estimate for the loss which the colony has sustained and must sustain through the default of the company. I ask honourable members to read the evidence given before the Royal Commission of 1880 (E.-3, 1880), evidence as to the value of land and timber—all the more valuable because given long before, and without reference to, the dispute between the present parties. A study of that evidence will, I trust, convince them the estimate I have submitted is more than justified.