

£546,000, or over half a million. I submit that is not in any way taking an extravagant view of the matter. To show you that these calculations are correct I would ask you to allow me to refer to page 17 of the Annual Report of the Lands and Survey Department. I find, amongst other things, it is said: "The approximate quantity of timber at present in this district on Crown and Native lands, and the export of timber for the last three years, is as under: On Crown lands, unsold, 7,888,400,000 ft.; on Native lands, 48,000,000 ft. The export of timber for each of the last three years was—for 1897, 10,473,000 ft.; for 1898, 10,000,000 ft.; for 1899, 12,165,600 ft." From that you will see that it may be fairly assumed that the output would have been one-third more, because the local consumption would swallow up that, so that the estimated annual output—13,000,000 ft.—is well within the mark. The next point I have to draw attention to is stock. I do not go into the question of cattle, but confine myself to sheep. Assuming, then, that one-half of the 88,000 acres would have been cleared and grassed, the figures would stand thus: 44,000 acres at one and a half sheep to the acre—and this is not too much to assume, because some of the pasture and there carries from three to four sheep to the acre—would mean 66,000 sheep. The profit per sheep I put down at 5s.—2s. 6d. for the fleece, and 2s. 6d. for the mutton. Down there in my time sheep would sell at £1 a head, and now even they are 15s. The total revenue from the 66,000 sheep would be £16,500 a year, which for the seven years amounts to £116,000, a not inconsiderable amount to circulate among a small population. I come next to population. It is somewhat difficult to estimate the loss that has been sustained in that respect, but I believe from the figures which I shall submit you will see that the loss has been very great. Each of the 760 applicants for land would have become a settler with a family. In a rough way, it is usually estimated there are four in a family, but I have taken it only at three, and thus they amount to 2,280 souls. The timber industry would swallow up at least 200 souls, and the stock and other industries another 220; so that there is a total loss to Westland of 2,700 souls. Now, with regard to the loss in Customs revenue, I find on reference to the Year-book, page 243, that the revenue is £2 15s. 4d., and the average for six years would be £2 11s. 9d. I have calculated it at £2 10s. in order to be on the safe side. That gives £6,750 per annum, and in the seven years £47,250. This sum represents the loss to the Westland District. It would be unjust to say this is a loss to the colony, because many persons who could not find a resting-place in Westland went to other parts of the colony, and therefore I have reduced that loss by one-third. I think one-third would be sufficient, because a few years ago, as we know, many went away to other colonies. The attractions of West Australia took a good many people from the colony, and principally from Westland. I think, therefore, that the loss to the colony under this head may be estimated at £31,500. Then there is this question of "thirds," which I have before referred to. The total of these "thirds" paid during the year was £27,322 12s. 6d., according to the Annual Report, page 211. In respect to other districts the "thirds" range from £2,000 to £5,000 each, the average being about £3,100; whereas poor Westland has received £42 2s. 11d. to make its roads with. The "thirds" to Westland should have amounted, on the basis which I have brought before you, to £11,300. I have had twenty-six years' experience of the West Coast, and I know what I am speaking of when I say that the cost of forming a fairly good road there is about £400 a mile. There is good metal everywhere, and no great difficulty in constructing roads; so that this £11,300 would have given Westland an additional thirty miles of roads. What a difference that would have made to settlement and to the mining industry. Quite lately in the Auckland District I have sold over 100,000 acres in the Kawhia district, and if we had not had roads there we should only have been able to sell about 30,000 acres, but as it is every section there was taken up quickly, and, in fact, they were fought over. That will show the difference between a district in which the roading is attended to and a district in which it cannot be attended to. I come to some other smaller considerations. There are, for instance, the export revenue, and the receipts from tourists and from trades and the artisan classes, all of which would have greatly benefited by the construction of this railway. If a district is prospering these classes will prosper, but if it is not prosperous, neither will they be so. The summary of my estimate relates to the losses in Westland alone. First the loss in rentals on lands for settlement was £23,100. With regard to timber I am only taking the interest. I am taking it, certainly, on the right side when I say the loss on the royalty on timber would be 4 per cent. annually, and that taken for five years would be £4,550; the loss in Customs revenue is £31,500, and that brings the total up to £59,150. To that has to be added £10,500 for reasons which I shall have to explain. In Westland there are a number of exceedingly fine swamp lands, and these at present are absolutely useless. Neither man nor beast would venture to go through them. In all other districts where we have had to reclaim swamps we have been put to considerable expense in the way of building sea-walls, erecting flood-gates, and so on, and in those cases they have all turned out most excellent speculations. By going to an expense of £1 per acre we have received for those swamps £3 and £4 per acre. Now, there are very fine swamps in Westland which would not require any such outlay. There is the Wataroa Swamp, which is five miles by four miles, or, in round numbers, 20,000 acres. Long before I left that district I had my eyes upon that swamp, and to a certain extent had arranged with the Surveyor-General that it should be drained and placed on the market. This would all have been done, and I am satisfied there would have been a large population settled on that land. The prairie-value of the land may be put at 10s. an acre, and the cost of reclaiming it at another 10s., while the selling-value would be £2 an acre at the lowest. Therefore the loss to the Government is 5 per cent. per annum on £1 10s. per acre, or £1,500 per annum, which multiplied by seven gives £10,500 for the seven years. Then there is the addition of the probable loss on population of about forty families, occupying 500 acres each, which should be taken into consideration. Therefore it is perfectly legitimate to add £10,500 to the other losses, which would bring the total up to £69,650. Besides that, in connection with the timber I have put down the output for fourteen years at £273,000, and the loss on sheep for the same period at £116,500. That would bring the loss of circulation of money in the district to £389,500. The figures referring to Westland comprise an estimate of revenue which would certainly have been obtained