

296. You say that, in your opinion, the revenue of the railway will steadily increase?—I think it will. Industries are steadily increasing now, and this must favourably affect the railway revenue.

297. Do you anticipate that the greater part of the increase will be due to the timber traffic or not?—A certain proportion will, but a large proportion will be owing to the mineral development and settlement.

298. Then, you do not think that the increase from timber will be equal to the amount which you anticipate will be derived from mineral development?—I do not say that. I am not in a position to make any definite estimate, but there is no doubt about the fact that there is now a considerable industrial development on the West Coast, which must enhance the railway traffic.

299. I asked first whether, in your opinion, a great part of the increase which you anticipate will be due to the timber?—A large portion of it.

300. More than half of it?—It will be the soonest realised, and other slower developments will then replace it. I have not the information on which to base an estimate of the proportion. I question whether anybody can do so with any degree of accuracy.

301. You anticipate a steady increase—population will increase, timber will increase, and there will be an increase in the minerals?—Yes, so I anticipate.

302. Do you see any reason—excepting in respect to timber—to anticipate any abnormal increase on the railway from Jackson's to Reefton?—I think dredging will increase and become a much larger industry than it is.

303. And you anticipate that there will be an increase in the passenger traffic by reason of the dredging?—Yes.

304. Leaving out the actual carriage of the machinery, what do you suppose a dredge is worth to the railway—how much a year?—There is a certain amount of coal required; there is the machinery for repairs and renewals; there is the food of the people engaged, and there are their fares, and so forth: therefore each dredge must give a considerable contribution to the railway traffic.

305. *Dr. Findlay.*] If these coal-measures beyond Reefton turn out successfully, the line from Reefton to Greymouth would have a largely increased coal traffic?—Possibly.

306. It would depend, of course, on the success of the coal-mines?—Yes, and of the quartz-mines.

307. Until lately the timber industry has not been in a very healthy condition?—No.

308. Within what time back?—For some years the mills were paying very badly. This was until about eighteen months or two years ago.

309. That marks the improvement in the timber industry?—About that period.

310. So that while the timber industry was in a backward condition the sale of this timber would be considerably retarded?—There was a slack market.

311. *The Chairman.*] Coming back to the Nelson Section, can you tell me the length of line surveyed by the company, starting from Belgrove on?—From Belgrove to Reefton or from Norris's Gully to Reefton there is no line surveyed by the company. There were no further surveys made for that distance; in fact, there were practically no surveys ever made there at all.

312. What surveys were done there were done by contract?—Yes; the field-work at Nelson was done by contract.

313. I suppose you will have that contract?—It will be with the others, I presume.

314. *Dr. Findlay.*] Who was the contractor?—Mr. Dartnell.

315. *The Chairman.*] Coming to the line from Brunnerton to Jackson's, how far did you survey that line?—We surveyed it from near Kaimata to Jackson's, as far as the company's construction extended, as the constructed line goes, and from Jackson's to Springfield.

316. Did you get the surveys of the line from where you commenced at Brunnerton to Kaimata from the Government?—The lines there were already staked, and we used their pegs and plans.

317. Coming to where you started the deviation from one side of Lake Brunner to the other, did you survey the line on the west side of Lake Brunner first?—There was a trial line there which had been done by the Government. We tried variations from it, and made trial surveys with a view of improving the gradients.

318. Did you spend any money on that side of the Lake that was afterwards abandoned?—Only on the revision surveys mentioned.

319. Can you give the Commission any idea of the money spent on that deviation that was afterwards useless?—Perhaps £150 or £200: I am speaking from recollection. Mr. Dobson did the field-work.

320. Did you do any surveys beyond where you finished the line at Jackson's?—Yes; we surveyed it right through to Springfield.

321. Was that a permanent or trial survey?—A permanent survey. We had a number of trial surveys, and alternative lines or variations, before completing the permanent survey. We had a permanent survey from Jackson's to Otira, and in addition to this there were cases where permanent surveys were twice done.

322. Can you tell us whether the survey you made has been used by the Government since in the construction of the line or any portion of it?—It has been used to Otira.

323. You gave them the surveys and plans?—Yes.

324. You are satisfied they are building the line according to those surveys as far as Otira?—Yes.

325. Taking the Springfield-Patterson's Creek end: from where you finished at that end, do you know whether they are following the survey there?—I have not been there since they began, but understand that our line is followed.