

pits at Levin, and also at Pukerua. It would not be so bad if the road was metalled. At present the coaches have to make *détours* to keep out of the mud-holes, which are 18 in. to 2 ft. deep, and with no possibility of metalling them. The value of the property in Foxton is increasing steadily every year. I have not got the figures of last year, but the increase is £700 on the rental value. The population also is increasing. Although the rental value last year was slightly less than the previous year, it is a considerable increase on the past six or seven years.

15. *The Chairman.*] If this year is less than last year you cannot say it is an increase?—There is a difference of £5, I think. I mean to say the increase between this last year has not been so great as the increase of the previous year, but there is an increase of some £700 on the previous year, of the annual rental value of the borough, and it is still increasing.

16. You do not take the value every year—it is a periodical valuation?—The valuation is made triennially, and then there is an annual additional valuation, and it is that annual addition that I am referring to. The triennial valuation will be made next year, and it will be considerably above this. It is the rental value in Foxton.

17. You told us there were four coaches leave daily from Foxton?—That is so. They leave Foxton and return the same day.

18. Two to Levin and two to Shannon?—Yes.

19. Now if this line were made, would it do away with the coaches?—Undoubtedly.

20. How is there to be any increase from the line to Shannon if it is to run past Shannon?—If this railway communication opens, there would be no increase between Shannon and Foxton. Our interests lie in Wellington, and it is to approach Wellington that we want to get it. The difficulty lies probably in this direction, that the Government in letting the mail contract specified that it should go through Shannon because there is a small post-office at Moutoa, and for that reason the Government mails have to be carried to Foxton *via* the Manawatu line.

21. Do they carry a mail to Levin?—There is no mail, only a passenger traffic. The coach from Levin simply carries passengers and goods only. There is no subsidy for a mail traffic.

22. You say it would shorten the through journey by about one hour from New Plymouth to Wellington by going by this route?—So I am given to understand.

23. Then what you suppose by that is that the Government would change the through route from the present to this proposed line?—I think it is possible that the Government would see the advantage of sending mails and passengers by the shorter and much easier line, saving the curves and wear-and-tear on the rolling-stock. The goods-trains would very likely use the other line.

24. What is about the distance from Foxton to Levin?—About eleven miles. By road I think it is rather more than that. That is the route that the proposed railway-line will take, and the coach-route is perhaps between twelve and thirteen miles.

25. *Mr. Lawry.*] What would be the effect on the traffic of the Manawatu line?—Well, we have not considered the question of the Manawatu line. I suppose it would take a little from them. What we have been considering is the needs of the settlers in the district in regard to this line being constructed. The settlers all round the district are practically cut off from railway communication with this loop-line from Palmerston.

26. *Mr. Wood.*] First, I understand you to say you want the line from Levin to Foxton?—Yes, that is so.

27. You do not care where it goes in from?—We should like to see it go through Levin, because we should have through communication to Bull's.

28. You want the line constructed from Levin to Foxton?—That is so.

29. And you would like it to go on there to have communication with Bull's. Have you not got railway communication with Bull's?—Not by Levin.

30. The train goes from Foxton to Greatford, and it goes from Palmerston to Greatford, and you want another communication?—Yes; it is much shorter.

31. You say it would avoid the heavy grades from Foxton and Greatford?—I understand there are some very heavy grades. I can only repeat what I have been told, that there are heavy grades between Greatford and Palmerston and stiff curves on both sides, I believe.

32. *The Chairman.*] You said that the shipping facilities would be greatly increased if you had this line through to Bull's. Have you any communication now with Bull's for your trade by the tram-line?—Not to Bull's—it is a station this side of Bull's.

33. It is quite close to it?—It means cartage again. If we had the line it would obviate that charge altogether. It means two charges, and in the other case it would mean the railway charge alone.

34. Can you get goods as cheap over the railway as by the tramway?—I think not. There is the Government charge from Foxton, and there is the tramway charge thereon.

35. The tramway is higher?—The combined charges make it more than one charge would be.

36. The whole thing would be cheaper if it was the railway the whole distance?—Yes.

ROBERT BRUCE MCKENZIE examined. (No. 3.)

37. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—Robert Bruce McKenzie.

38. Whom do you represent?—I am here on behalf of the local settlers, and the settlers of Bull's generally.

39. The Committee will be very pleased to hear any evidence you can give in connection with this matter?—I have here a letter from the Chairman of the Bull's Town Board authorising me to act for him, as he is unable to attend—Mr. Thomas King. I have several resolutions here passed by the different