

tion between the coast and Taupo will be relegated to the very remote future": The contention against any petition in the future would be that the district is already served by the private line of the Taupo Totara Timber Company, and if the concessions asked for are granted it would be unfair for the Government to enter into active competition where they have already granted a charter on the security of which capitalists had been induced to invest their money. And in our opinion the country would be saddled with this private line practically for all time, because it would never be advisable for the country to purchase it. (4.) "That in an interior district the existence of a private railway with the concessions asked for is a bar to the settlement and development of the country when compared with the advantages appertaining to a State-owned line under similar conditions": In section 2 of the petition it is specifically mentioned that the cost of cartage of the necessities of settlement and of products for markets and export renders settlement under present conditions virtually impossible. The fallacy of the petitioners' contention in regard to offering facilities and cheapening the carriage of such goods as are essential to the settlement of a new district can be best exemplified by citing the actual rates now being charged by the Taupo Totara Timber Company on the fifty miles of line already in operation, at the same time bearing in mind that the salvation of the pumice lands in this Dominion depends on cheap transit and cheap manures, and that the products of poor lands have to compete with the products of more favoured and fertile districts. Class E ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons minimum)—Barley, bonedust, flour, oats, wheat, maize, bran, pollard, manures, grass-seeds, fibre: Government line, 140 miles, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate 11s. 4d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company could charge £1 18s. maximum; Putaruru—Oruanui, 48 miles, present rate £1 2s. 6d.; total, Auckland—Oruanui, 188 miles (16 miles from Taupo), £1 13s. 10d.; Auckland to Oruanui Siding, maximum rate £2 9s. 4d.; Government line, 230 miles, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, 15s. 7d. Class D—Bacon, soap, butter, cheese, wire netting, wool-packs, plain wire, corrugated iron. Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate £1 11s. 6d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru—Oruanui, present rate £1 2s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £2 14s.; Auckland to Oruanui Siding, maximum rate £3 9s. 6d.; Government line, 230 miles, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, £1 19s. Class C—Cabin bread, castings, door-frames, nails, poultry, rope, sashes, barrel beer, barbed wire: Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate £1 18s. 9d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate £1 2s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £3 1s. 3d.; Auckland to Oruanui Siding, maximum rate £3 16s. 9d.; Government line, 230 miles, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, £2 6s. 4d. Class B—Case beer, biscuits, boats, boots, cheese, confectionery, earthenware, preserved fruit (New Zealand), hides, implements, luggage, saddlery, sugar: Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate £2 8s. 2d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate £1 2s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates, £4 6s. 2d.; Government line, 230 miles, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, £2 19s. 3d. Class A—Bedsteads, benzine, cartridges, all sundries, kerosene, spirits: Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate £2 19s. 4d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate £1 2s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £4 1s. 10d.; Auckland to Oruanui Siding, maximum rate £4 17s. 4d.; Government line, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, £3 14s. 4d. Chaff (6-ton trucks): Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate £2 6s. 3d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate £6 15s.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £9 1s. 3d.; Government line, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, £3 8s. 6d. Coal, native (4-ton minimum, per ton): Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate 9s. 8d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate (open trucks) 17s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £1 7s. 2d.; Government line, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, 13s. 4d. Flax, dressed fibre: Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate 11s. 4d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate £1 2s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £1 13s. 10d.; Government line, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, 15s. 7d. Coke: Government line, Auckland to Putaruru, present rate 14s. 3d.; Taupo Totara Timber Company, Putaruru to Oruanui, present rate (open trucks) 17s. 6d.; total, Auckland to Oruanui, present rates £1 11s. 9d.; Government line, Auckland to Taupo *via* Rotorua, 19s. Wool: Oruanui Siding to Auckland, 9s. 9d. per bale (3 cwt. bales, undumped); Taupo to Auckland *via* Rotorua, 7s. 9d. per bale. NOTE.—Present rate shown is still 16 miles from Taupo (Taupo Totara Timber Company); Government rate is to Taupo. Class E (minimum  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons): State-owned railways tariff enables consignor to forward goods 400 miles, as against under 50, Taupo Totara Timber Company's rates (minimum) of £1 2s. 6d. (5.) "That as a tourist route the suggested Taupo—Rotorua line is incomparably superior and capable of greater development than the Putaruru—Taupo line": The petitioners claim in clause 5 that the extension of their tramway will result in the rapid development of a tourist district not now fully known, and that this would result in a largely increased passenger traffic upon the Government railways to and from Putaruru. To favourably compare the development of increased tourist traffic to Taupo, following upon the opening of a line from Putaruru, with the probable increase accruing from a line from Rotorua is manifestly absurd, seeing that at Rotorua there is continually about a thousand to two thousand visitors in temporary residence who could visit Taupo and return to Rotorua on the same day, as compared with a special trip of thirty-two miles to Putaruru to connect with the Taupo Totara Timber Company's line, and the return journey of thirty-two miles. The opposition of Rotorua residents to the present petition has been attributed to a fear that the superior attractions of Taupo would result in reduction of traffic to Rotorua. The absurdity of this contention is evident from the very fact that the people of Rotorua are agitating for railway communication with Taupo, by what they consider the best route. What the people of Rotorua are afraid of is the operations of a gigantic trust, whose self-interest will operate by every possible means to deflect as much as possible of the tourist traffic from State railways and a State town to a private railway and an opposition