

4. And also manager of the Bank of New Zealand at Marton for a number of years?—Yes.
5. And, I think, a director of the Bank of New Zealand for some years?—Yes.
6. I think you know the Rangitikei and Manawatu Counties very well?—Yes, I do.
7. Do you know Dalrymple's, McKelvie's, Wilson Bros.', and Donald Fraser's properties?—

Yes.

8. Those properties which have been referred to by the witnesses as suitable for subdivision?—Yes, I know all the properties.

9. It is suggested that those properties are suitable for subdivision, and that if a railway were constructed from Levin to Marton that they probably would be subdivided?—Well, it depends on which properties you refer to.

10. Take L. R. McKelvie's, which is close to the mouth of the Rangitikei River [map referred to and properties indicated]?—It is suitable for cutting up, but has no connection with the tram-line unless there is a bridge across. J. McKelvie has 12,000 acres. Some of it is a grazing-right from the Crown. Dalrymple and Wilson own 12,000 acres south of the Rangitikei River and south of J. McKelvie's. Wilson is a son of Sir J. G. Wilson.

11. Are those lands at the present time suitable for subdivision?—McKelvie's runs are not: they would be in large areas, but most of it is composed of sandhills and swamps. Of course, he has some good land there.

12. Would the construction of a railway or extension of the tramway affect the question of the subdivision of those properties?—No, they are roaded now. Take the Koponui Block, in the estate of the late Walter Johnston, that is better land, and was subdivided, and is between Rongotea and Palmerston North.*

13. What is the nearest point of the railway?—Bonny Glen. The roads run across from the main Bull's-Turakina Road to the main road from Marton, and these branch roads go on to the railway-line. The tendency has always been to go to Marton from Heaton Park.

14. Is Bonny Glen as close to Marton as Wilson's?—It is closer. It is about four miles to Bonny Glen.

15. You are a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and have taken a great interest in matters of that character?—Yes.

16. In your opinion would the proposed construction of the railway from Levin to Marton affect the Wairarapa or Hawke's Bay districts?—Materially. It would cut off the connection from the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay very materially. It would affect the whole thing.

17. You mean in the matter of inconvenience?—Yes, inconvenience, and it would not pay. The tram-line now is a dead asset to the Manawatu County Council. As you are aware, there are more people joining the train for Hawke's Bay here (Palmerston North) than would ever come from other localities on the proposed line.

18. In your opinion, what are the objections to the construction of this line?—Well, in the first place, it is absolutely unnecessary. There are lines in the Dominion that require construction long before a superfluous line like this is constructed. The time may come when it will be necessary, but it is not necessary now, and will not open up settlement. It could only be treated as a non-payable branch line. I do not say that when urgent fast traffic is necessary between Auckland and Wellington in thirty or forty years that it may not become necessary, but for very many years to come it will be quite unnecessary. The cost of construction over the swampy portion, the bridge over the Manawatu, the bridge over the Rangitikei, and provision against flooding at Foxton would amount to an enormous cost.

19. Is there any portion south of Foxton that suffers from floods from the Manawatu River along the proposed route?—It floods all along the bank right down to where the Awakino Bridge crosses the road—about a mile this side of the bridge towards Levin.

20. Does it flood seriously?—Yes, it blocks the road. There is no necessity for the railway, because the roads are level, in good order, and in the right direction. With the tramway there is no settler in that district who can be affected by it who is more than six miles from the railway. None of the settlers in the Kairanga would go up beyond Rongotea—they would make for Palmerston; and there are good motor-roads.

21. When you were managing the Loan and Mercantile business here you were purchasing grain and produce from the Sandon district?—Yes.

22. How did it come in?—It came in by tram or was carted. The majority of the farmers cart their grain themselves. It does not cost them anything in this way, because they have their own teams. The agricultural farmer has a certain number of teams: he has to keep them fed, and in the off season he does the carting of his grain wherever he has to cart it to, as there is nothing else to do with his horses. It practically costs him nothing. He takes it to the nearest railway and puts it on the trucks. A great deal of grain used to be carted from Sandon to here, but Feilding now draws on the Sandon district a good deal because it is closer.

23. Have you had any experience in regard to the Sandon farmers or farmers in other districts burning their straw?—They burn wheat straw, but that is done all over the country, and they do not burn oaten straw unless old and wet and useless. They feed the cattle on the oaten straw and burn the wet straw, but at Awapuni Camp they were able to get £4 per ton for any straw when war broke out. It all depends on the price and the demand whether they will burn wheat straw.

24. There is a limited and very uncertain market?—Yes. If chaff is very high in price they chaff the oaten straw. If chaff is low they feed the stock on it.

* Witness subsequently wrote: "Referring to Wilson Bros.' property, part of the old Heaton Park Estate, these Wilsons are in no way connected with the Wilson of Wilson and Dalrymple. The land is situated about six miles from Bull's and about four miles from the Bonny Glen Railway-station.