

8. What is the character of the land for settlement?—When it gets up as far as Barewood Station it is comparatively good land until it reaches Strath Taieri. Barewood Station is an educational reserve. It is bounded by Sutton Stream and Deep Stream. The land on Hindon Station also, some of it facing down on Deep Stream, is very fair quality. It was projected to have opened some of it on deferred payments. When you get up as far as Strath Taieri Hundred it is very good land, and it is good land all the way towards Hyde, *Hon. D. Reid.*
29th Aug., 1877.

9. And beyond that towards the Maniototo Plains?—I do not consider it very good land, but I suppose it is as good as is left now.

10. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Have you any idea what quantity of land has been sold on the proposed route from Taieri to Clyde?—Well I think the line where it branches from the main line would pass through a distance perhaps of three or four miles of sold land in the Taieri—that is, between the Taieri River and the main line. Then it goes through Crown land the whole way, except a small quantity of freehold land in the Strath Taieri Hundred, in which about 8,000 acres have been sold.

11. *Mr. De Lautour.*] Do you think the country in the Maniototo Plains would keep a population, provided a railway was made up through it?—Some parts of the Maniototo Plains are, I believe, fit to carry population, if they were provided with a good means of access. I have only passed over the Maniototo Plains, and cannot say that I am so well able to speak of them as people are who have resided there. These plains are, I believe, subject to droughts in summer time and to severe frosts in winter.

12. Has all the land been taken up in all these interior plains?—I think the land in Strath Taieri open for sale has all been taken up.

13. *The Chairman.*] And Ida Valley?—I believe so; I cannot say positively, but can get all that information if it is required.

14. There has been no large quantity in these interior plains ever opened to the public, has there?—Not a very large quantity. I think in the Strath Taieri Hundred there were 8,500 acres.

15. We have had no practical test as to whether the land would be utilized or not?—There is nothing to believe that it would not be occupied if the people had the chance. With respect to the Hindon Station, when Mr. McKerrow and myself passed through the province with a view to select land to be opened for settlement, we considered that part of Hindon Station would be well adapted for deferred-payment sections. That is higher land than a good deal of this line would pass through.

16. Are you aware whether every section offered in the Manuherikia Valley has been taken up?—I believe so, generally, but cannot speak positively.

17. There is a small gold field at Hindon?—Yes.

18. It communicates with Mount Ida gold field?—There is access to the Mount Ida gold field. It is an accessible route.

19. It also communicates with the Dunstan District?—It is accessible.

20. Does not the railway pass through the Mount Ida, Hindon, and Dunstan gold fields?—The proposed railway does, certainly.

21. *Mr. Hislop.*] Has there been no application for land in here (points to map)?—It is not open for occupation.

22. Have there been any clamours for land about here (points to map)?—Strath Taieri has been opened, and the whole, about 8,500 acres sold. I believe the Strath Taieri block was opened in 1870 or 1871.

23. *The Chairman.*] Was there not great depression amongst the farmers even in the lower plain. It was no test of settlement?—It was not a fair test of settlement, there was great depression at the time, there being no road to the land. The means of access to the Strath Taieri Hundred is *viâ* Outram, which makes a long circuit, of course, as compared with proposed route.

24. Has there not been a large demand for land at Ida Valley and Moonlight Flat?—Yes.

25. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Supposing that line is made right on to Clyde, have you any idea how many families might be profitably located in the territory on the same scale as in the Taieri now, for example?—Perhaps there might be ultimately a thousand families located.

26. Who could not be profitably located now?—They could not be located without the means of access; without a road of some sort.

27. *The Chairman.*] We will now come to the Tuapeka line. You know the country between Lawrence and Clyde?—Yes.

28. What do you think of that as a country for settlement?—It is not very good land.

29. Is that private property or Crown land?—I think nearly all the good land is private property.

30. And between the Teviot and Clyde is there any available land?—It is very limited. If any, it is in patches.

31. *Mr. Macandrew.*] I understand you to say that the line, if taken from Lawrence to Clyde, the land would be very limited as compared with the other?—Very limited. It would open up scarcely any additional land for settlement.

32. *The Chairman.*] What kind of country is it from Kingston to Frankton?—It is very limited in extent.

33. You would not think there were 8,000 acres on the side of the mountains?—No.

34. Do you know the country between Frankton and Cromwell?—Yes; the country just on that side of the river where the line is marked is rocky, I should not think it fit for agriculture; but there is some very good land about Arrowtown, very good farming land.

35. *Mr. Macandrew.*] I would put this general question—assuming the interior of Otago is to be opened up, are you of opinion the line by Strath Taieri is that which would affect the greatest area of available country?—Clearly the line by Strath Taieri is the line that will do the greatest good to the interior of the province; it will open up the greatest area of land for settlement, as well as meet the requirements, in my estimation, of the interior districts; it will bring them in direct communication with the chief seaport.