

Hon. D. Reid.
29th Aug., 1877.

36. *Mr. Carrington.*] You have a good knowledge of that country?—Yes; I might be allowed to say that in the year 1864 there was a Select Committee of the Provincial Council to inquire as to the best road to the interior. Mr. Macandrew and I were members of that Committee; I dare say the evidence taken by that Committee would be available. I can send for the report of the Committee. It was for a road; railways to that part were not thought of then. The question was which was the best road to the interior. There was a good deal of valuable evidence taken at the time, but it was never printed.

Mr. Thomson.
29th Aug., 1877.

Mr. THOMSON examined.

37. *The Chairman.*] Your name is J. T. Thomson?—Yes.
 38. And you are Surveyor-General of the colony?—Yes.
 39. This is a copy of the Public Works Report (produced)?—Yes.
 40. There are seven intended routes for railways into the interior?—Yes. To what part of the interior?
 41. *The Chairman.*] All converging at Clyde?—Of course. If it is to Clyde, I would give one answer; if to Cromwell, another.
 42. Will you be good enough to give us the information we require. Do you know the route from Mosgiel, say, by way of Strath Taieri?—Yes; I know the country well between the Taieri, Strath Taieri, Maniototo Plains, and Ida Valley.
 43. I will ask you first as to the character of the country by this route?—It is generally easy excepting, say, at two points; one point is between the Taieri Plain and Strath Taieri, and the other between Hyde and Taieri Lake. Starting at Mosgiel, then you cross the Lower Taieri Plain until you come to another valley near the North Taieri, which enters into the valley of Taieri River. I forget the name of that valley. It is near the Presbyterian church, not very far from Mr. Donald Reid's place. From there to Cromwell it is pretty easy, excepting at the above two points.
 44. *Mr. Macandrew.*] It is almost all level country?—Excepting these parts above stated.
 45. *The Chairman.*] What is the character of the land through which that line would pass?—It is generally pastoral, with some pieces of agricultural land. It is generally pastoral country.
 46. And at Strath Taieri?—There is a good piece of agricultural land there.
 47. And Maniototo Valley?—There is some agricultural land there.
 48. And Ida Burn Valley?—Yes; there is some agricultural land there.
 49. And Manuhirikia Valley?—There is not much agricultural land there.
 50. Have you seen that lately, since it has been cultivated?—No; not since.
 51. You are not aware that they are growing very heavy crops in Manuhirikia Valley?—I am not. It would be only in small pieces at any rate; it is generally gravelly and light.
 52. Can you inform the Committee what proportion of this is Crown land, and what proportion is private property?—The greatest portion is Crown land.
 53. Are you aware that anything is sold beyond the Taieri?—In the Strath Taieri I think about 40,000 acres have been sold. I may be wrong, because I have not been watching the land sales for some time.
 54. And beyond that?—I do not know how much has been sold. I have not been watching the land sales.
 55. Do you know anything of the country beyond Cromwell?—Yes.
 56. Towards the West Coast?—Yes.
 57. Is that level country?—It is quite level to Wanaka Lake, and quite level up to Hawea Lake.
 58. You do not know it beyond that?—I have seen as far as the eastern slopes of the Southern Alps. It is quite level up to Matukituki Valley. I have seen up to there (Lake Wanaka).
 59. *Mr. Carrington.*] Has there ever been a section taken of this line?—I do not think so. We took the levels in various parts. This is 900 feet here (Taieri Lake), and I made this (Rough Ridge) 1,500 feet.
 60. *The Chairman.*] You estimate the line referred to, at the corner of Rough Ridge, at an elevation of 1,500 feet?—The summit level would be that.
 61. The country descends that you pass through?—Yes.
 62. Until you get to 600 feet?—To 500.
 63. What is the highest point, then, up to the lake?—About 1,000 feet. When I took the levels, it was done by a small theodolite. These were done afterwards by a larger theodolite.
 64. *Mr. De Lautour.*] That summit level would not be on the line of the proposed railway?—The railway must go over the summit.
 65. Yes; but some miles higher up. That might account for the discrepancy of the figures?—Yes.
 66. *The Chairman.*] There is no necessity of going up higher than 1,500 feet?—As an engineer, I would require to take the levels before answering that question; but as a surveyor, I should think not.
 67. As to the Palmerston route, do you know anything of the country between Palmerston and Blair Taieri?—Yes; I know it intimately.
 68. As a line for the construction of a railway, which would you consider the easiest and least expensive route—that from North Taieri or that from Palmerston?—This is more level, but more difficult (by the River Taieri); this is highest (by Macrae's).
 69. What is the difference in length from Dunedin?—I have not ticked that off.
 70. What kind of land is this in here (Palmerston line)?—Poor hilly land, but it would be higher. This (by the Taieri River) would go level, but it is very difficult of construction. It goes through what Americans call a canon; it would have to go for thirty miles alongside the river.
 71. You are speaking of the first twenty miles or so?—Yes.
 72. *Mr. Hislop.*] Is there any good land on this side of the Gorge?—It is almost all pastoral.