

73. Is it easy of access to this Gorge?—It is very steep. The whole of this—the land on the Deep Stream—will ultimately be agricultural land, because I have seen excellent crops of oats and turnips taken off that land, and land which will do that is fit for anything. That is at an elevation of 2,500 feet. So that ultimately, when the population spreads, a great deal of what is now called pastoral will become agricultural land. The line by way of Palmerston goes over a high altitude—by the Taieri River it is nearly level; but the line by way of Taieri would probably be an expensive line to work, in consequence of frequent sharp curves. Mr. Thomson.
29th Aug., 1877.

74. Mr. Macandrew.] Have you any idea of the area of agricultural and pastoral land that a line from Mosgiel to Naseby, say, will affect or influence—what area of agricultural land to Naseby, say—we will call that the first section of the line?—Taking it all, I should think there would be 150,000 acres of agricultural land.

75. And how much of pastoral?—An immense quantity, two or three millions of acres.

76. And 150,000 acres of agricultural land?—Yes.

77. And then from Naseby on to Clyde, how much agricultural?—You might get, probably at a rough guess, 100,000 acres of what you would call agricultural land.

78. That is, 250,000 acres from Mosgiel to Clyde?—I should think so. Of course I must guard myself against stating positively. A narrow investigation may possibly disclose more.

79. And millions of acres of pastoral country?—Six or seven millions of acres; six millions, say, to the Upper Clutha.

80. That is as far as?—Clyde. That would not all be affected by the railway. Taking the watershed, there would be about 2,500,000 acres.

81. Mr. De Lautour.] I should like to ask whether the experience of the department has not been that classification, so far as agricultural land has been concerned, has not been very satisfactory hitherto? What I mean is, that land classed as pastoral country has been taken as agricultural country when it could be got?—Of course I have seen a great difference of opinion on the subject, and of course it is the stockowner's interest against the mining and agricultural interest. These take different views. I have been quite run down before now when called on to decide what was agricultural and what was pastoral land.

82. I want to know whether the reports as to what was pastoral and what was agricultural land have given satisfaction?—Whenever a survey has been exceedingly correct, a great deal of bad feeling has come on the department for having stated what the truth was. When I stated that this was agricultural land, there was a perfect storm of indignation from one side; and when I said this was pastoral land, the opposite class was against me.

83. Mr. Macandrew.] I suppose that as population increases almost the whole of that country will be agricultural land?—When I first went up the country in 1857 I stated that one-fourth of the province was capable of raising corn and vegetables; that there were about four millions of acres fit for agriculture; but in the meantime, with a sparse population, that does not hold good exactly. I think experience will show that my estimate was correct. I told the people at the same time that the province would carry 4,000,000 sheep. They laughed at me, but it has carried what I said it could.

84. The Chairman.] We shall now come to the Tuapeka line. You know the country between Lawrence and Clyde?—Oh yes; very well indeed.

85. What is the character of that?—Generally it is difficult for railway construction. Of course, there are some parts easy. That part is easy from Roxburgh to Ettrick.

86. What length is that?—About ten miles.

87. And the rest is difficult?—Yes, between Dunkeld and the Menzionburn. It would require an actual investigation of the spot to give a very certain opinion, but it appears to be difficult.

88. What is the character of the land for settlement?—There is a band of agricultural land from Roxburgh down to Menzionburn.

89. Is that Crown land or private property?—A large portion of it is private property.

90. Are you aware whether there is any available Crown land on the whole route of this railway?—There is not very much; I do not suppose there are 20,000 acres at the utmost.

91. Would it be an expensive line to make?—Very expensive from Alexandra down to Roxburgh.

92. Now, you see those yellow lines on the map?—Yes.

93. Do you know the country in the Waitaki Valley?—Yes, the whole of it.

94. Do you know the land between Duntroon and Naseby?—Quite well.

95. And the Kyeburn Valley and Naseby?—Yes.

96. What is the character of that country?—It is very good to Livingstone, and then it becomes very difficult until you get down into the Maniototo Plains.

97. That is over the ranges?—Yes.

98. What is the character of the country between those two points?—It is very rocky.

99. What is the summit level?—About 2,500 feet, judging from my recollection, but I may be wrong.

100. What is the character of the country as regards settlement?—It is very bare between Livingstone and the Kyeburn.

101. Any of it fit for agriculture?—No.

102. The land below Livingstone—is that private property or Crown land?—Private property.

103. There is no agricultural country on that line Crown land?—Not until you get down to the Taieri Plains.

104. Mr. De Lautour.] Would you tell us what distance of rough country there is between Livingstone and Kyeburn?—I should think about twelve miles.

105. And between Mosgiel and Blair Taieri?—About twenty-two miles.

106. And do you consider that the cost per mile of constructing the ten miles would be greater than the cost per mile of constructing the twenty-two miles?—I could not give an opinion without actual levels.