

Mr. Thomson.
29th Aug., 1877.

107. Would the cost of the twenty-two miles be more than the cost of the ten miles?—It might not; but I could not give an opinion exactly. It would require an accurate engineer's section to do that.

108. I understood you to say there were no Crown lands below Livingstone?—I do not think there are.

109. Would you give that answer subject to correction. I understand there is a considerable area, and you might refresh your memory before the evidence is complete?—Of course I would.

110. There is no agricultural land in the Upper Maerewhenua country?—No.

111. Have you any idea of its mineral value as regards coal?—I am not aware there is coal there. There is slate, and there might be copper. I believe copper will be found.

112. Mr. Hislop.] Taking the watershed, you say there would be 2,500,000 acres?—Yes.

113. And supposing this line was constructed to Kyeburn, and extended ultimately, it would have some effect in opening this country?—Yes.

114. Then the Deep Stream country would be balanced by the Livingstone country?—Nearly so.

115. The Chairman.] The Waitaki country is already in communication with the main line?—Yes.

116. And the Strath Taieri is not?—At least, it is farther away than the other.

117. The line from Duntroon to the Maniototo Plains is about forty miles in length?—Yes.

118. What is the distance from Mosgiel up to the commencement of this point from which it would have to commence?—About fifty-five miles up to the commencement of the second rough part from North Taieri to Hyde. I think that would be about fifty-five miles.

119. How far is the point you commence at from Dunedin?—It is about ten miles from the North Taieri to Dunedin.

120. You know the country between Kingston and Cromwell, by way of Frankton?—Yes.

121. What kind of country is that?—It is level alongside the lake, except just here at the Staircase.

122. What character of country is it—agricultural or pastoral?—Some of it is agricultural land, but it is mostly pastoral. There is a narrow strip along the edge of the lake which might be made agricultural land, except at the Staircase.

123. How much do you think there is of that narrow strip fit for agriculture?—About 8,000 acres, from the foot of the lake to Frankton.

124. And from Frankton to Cromwell?—There is no agricultural land to speak of.

WEDNESDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1877.

MR. JAMES MCKERROW examined.

Mr. McKerrow.
29th Aug., 1877.

125. The Chairman.] What are you, Mr. McKerrow?—I am Assistant Surveyor-General of New Zealand.

126. You have had a great deal of experience in traversing the Provincial District of Otago, have you not?—Yes.

127. You were formerly reconnoitering surveyor?—Yes.

128. In that capacity you have travelled over the greater part of the country comprised within these proposed railway routes?—Yes.

129. Taking them in the order we have hitherto done, commencing with the Strath Taieri, will you be good enough to inform the Committee, first, what is the nature of the country with regard to its suitability for railway construction?—From North Taieri to Strath Taieri is a piece of extremely difficult country. The line would require to pass up a steep rocky gorge, where there would be enormous steep cuttings and the bridging of tributary streams.

130. What is the length of the first section which you say would be so difficult?—About twenty-four miles from North Taieri on to Blair Taieri.

131. And from Blair Taieri to Hyde?—The construction would be very easy. It passes up a beautiful level valley a distance of 16 miles. Then from Hyde to the Taieri Lake, a distance of nine miles, it would be ordinarily easy, neither very difficult nor very easy, and a fair average. Then from the Taieri Lake to the Rough Ridge it would also be a very easy construction—a distance of sixteen miles. Then from Rough Ridge to the Poolburn Gorge, a distance of say eleven miles, the construction would also be very easy. Then from the Poolburn Gorge, a distance of about three miles, the construction would be extremely difficult, passing through a deep rocky gorge, which cannot be avoided. Then from the Poolburn Gorge to Clyde, a distance of about twenty-four miles, the construction would be very easy. Then from Clyde to Cromwell, a distance of thirteen miles, it would pass through a gorge where the construction would be the average in railway construction along the river bank.

132. The second question is this: What is the character of the country through which this line would pass?—We will take it in the same sections. From North Taieri to Blair Taieri the country may be described as semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural, the pastoral predominating. From Blair Taieri to Hyde it passes through a very fine agricultural district. From Hyde to the Taieri Lake the country is again semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural. Then from the Taieri Lake to Rough Ridge on to Poolburn the country may be said to be half agricultural and half pastoral. It is a great level plain, rather a high elevation probably for growing wheat. Then from Poolburn Gorge to Clyde it passes through a very fine valley (Manuherikia), of which a belt four or five miles wide may be said to be all agricultural. Some of it is very shingly, but under irrigation and perhaps shelter it would grow oats.

133. In speaking of this country between Rough Ridge and Poolburn, what kind of country is that?—It is country I have described now as semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural, and I believe it would grow oats very well; but it is at a very high altitude, varying from 1,200 feet up to 2,000 feet.

134. Now, what would you say was the total area of land available for agricultural settlement from North Taieri up to Clyde, that would be rendered accessible by the construction of such a line?—There will be 1,200,000 acres opened up.

135. Agricultural?—Oh, no; mixed.