

clearly what the Commission is appointed for: whether it is appointed to determine in which direction the line should be extended.

13. All I can do is to show you the Commission, and you can judge for yourself?—(Witness, having perused the Commission, said) I see it is for the extension of the railway. I asked this question because I have good reason to suppose that, at this inquiry, either here or in Ashburton, a third party will come forward to try and make the line into a fork from somewhere lower down and carry it across the Rangitata Plains.

13A. He can only give evidence to show the advisability of such a fork?—But does your Commission include such a thing?

14. It is "the extension" of this line, and I am now trying to understand what it means. There are two lines you spoke of?—It seems to me it must start from the end of the present line.

14A. Just so; it usually means that?—I understand that a third party will advocate a forked line.

15. That is not part of your evidence. You are to give evidence of your view and of the interests which you are supposed to advocate in this district. It is not a question of opposing any other project. That, I take it, is the object of the evidence we want from you?—My impression is that if the line is taken across the south branch of the river it will open up a very large traffic in timber and also in stone. There is some of the best stone in the colony on the north side of the river. I may mention that the stone here is to be used for Mr. R. M. Morten's new buildings in Colombo Street and Cathedral Square. Mr. Lambert has reported that it is the best building-stone in the colony.

16. Is it up the Ashburton River?—Yes.

17. Limestone?—Yes. The line would have to be carried across the south branch to reach Alford Forest.

18. Is there any traffic in the timber of the forest at present?—Yes, a large quantity is being taken out.

19. How is the timber exported?—A large quantity is taken by Methven, and some by this line. If the line were taken across the river a dray could go two trips a day, and the timber could be worked to a much greater extent. There is also very good stone for burning lime on the north side of the river, and there is coal within a short distance of where the line would go.

20. Where is the coal situated?—It is about seven miles above the Mount Somers Township, on the north side of the river.

21. That is a very thick seam?—There is over 14ft. opened up at present. I may say that all the lime used in Christchurch comes from about thirty miles south of Dunedin.

22. And have you any reason for supposing that this lime would take the place of that?—Yes; I believe that, if the line were taken across the river to such a distance as would enable two trips a day to be made with a dray, we could undersell the Dunedin people.

23. Do you mean lime or limestone?—Lime.

24. What is the agricultural produce of this neighbourhood? is any quantity of corn raised here?—We have collected statistics for the information of the Commissioner. I have here a summary of the returns for the district benefited by an extension of the line to Bowyer's Stream. [Statement put in; see Appendix A.] The district benefited by the extension is indicated on the map by a red line. It is bounded by the rivers. The produce would be carted to the proposed Bowyer's Stream terminus rather than across the river. The statistics have been carefully collected from various people in the district. There is coal in the Alford Forest, but there are no roads to get it out at present. There are several limestone deposits on the north side of the river; and there is also coal in several places. This statement shows what part of the country would be benefited by the extension of the line up the south side of the south branch of the Ashburton. [Statement put in; see Appendix B.] A line was proposed starting from Anama and going to Edson's corner (Rural Section No. 29573.); the second route was to Bowyer's Stream; and the third, up the south side of the South Ashburton. These statistics which I now hand in represent the country which would be benefited by the southern line, and which is shown on the map by a blue line. The boundaries of this district are natural boundaries, and this extension would be of no benefit to land south of the North Hinds River, because of the general formation of the country: there is a high ridge between the North Hinds and this line, so that it is clear that people would not go down the valley and then come up two or three hundred feet in height with produce.

25. How do you arrive at the position of the blue line?—The blue line shows the country we consider would be benefited by the extension.

26. Why did you not bring the blue line farther south?—Because this line would be perfectly inaccessible to land south-west of "The Brothers." I consider that we have included by the blue line a larger extent of country than would be really benefited. We might fairly have kept it to the north of the ridge. We should be very glad if you would satisfy yourself that the boundaries we have assigned to the two districts are fairly drawn. There is a large quantity of good land to the south-west, but we maintain that it would not be benefited by the line, as the Anama Station answers every purpose.

27. You have a road-bridge over the river; who built it?—It was built by the Ashburton County Council and the Mount Somers Road Board.

28. It was built to give access to the Railway Station?—No, it was built before that. We all expected the railway would cross lower down. All three streams—Taylor's Branch, Bowyer's Stream, and the south branch of the Ashburton—were bridged at the same time, without any reference whatever to the railway.

29. Is any of the district included within the red lines served by the Methven line?—To a small extent. Timber is sent down from Alford Forest by way of Methven.

30. And produce?—which way does the wool raised here go?—A small proportion by Methven, some is carted direct to Ashburton, and some is sent by the present Mount Somers line.