

warrant constructing the line for the Government, I should say, Take it over; but at present, as far as I can judge, it is no better than Kamo coal.

45. Why do you say you would recommend the Government to take over the line if it communicated with deep water?—Because then, I understand, larger steamers would go for coal. At present you cannot load steamers with more than 180 or 190 tons. A large steamer would not go near any wharf to load unless it could keep afloat.

46. I understood you to say that the coal is not adapted for steaming-purposes?—Not for ocean-going steamers.

47. Do you think, in that case, large steamers would come?—I think the Union Company's steamers would come.

48. Of what description is the coal?—Brown coal. We sent a load down to Dunedin a few weeks ago, but have not yet received any report on it.

49. What expenditure would be necessary to get deep water?—About £30,000.

50. Would that be for an extension of the wharf?—No: the railway would have to cross the river and go a mile and a half lower down; they would then get 40ft. in depth.

51. Would you recommend that extension?—I always have recommended it, and I understood from the Premier that he had given his consent that it should be done: now he tells me, when he gave that promise he had no idea it was going to cost so much.

52. What was your estimate then?—£15,000. We have surveyed it and gone very closely into the matter, and I think the estimate now is £40,000.

53. What would dredging cost?—About £10,000. If dredging would effect the desired end, it would be the best and proper thing to do; but I am extremely doubtful if dredging will effect the object desired.

54. Are there many sidings of like character to this in the colony?—Yes, a good many.

55. Do you think, if this were taken over, there would be claims to have the others taken also?—Yes.

56. Do you think that taking them over would prevent the Government entertaining the question of making sidings in future?—I do not know. Of course, it is well enough to consider these things if you have got money; but if you once begin you would have to provide an amount which it would be exceedingly difficult to estimate.

57. Therefore, as a policy, you do not think it advisable to take over or construct sidings at the expense of the Government?—No; I should not recommend it in the present state of the finances of the colony.

58. *Mr. Montgomery.*] You said that one steamer injured her boilers very much by using this coal?—It was Kamo coal. The quality is much the same.

59. That is the coal which would be shipped if dredging operations made it possible for large steamers to come alongside?—Yes. I do not say that Whauwhau coal would have done the same.

60. Do you consider the Kamo coal any way inferior to Whauwhau coal?—I think it is about the same quality. I know the construction of the line has been a very great tax on this company. They worked the line at a very great disadvantage for many years as a wooden tramway, and because of the cost of keeping it in repair they were obliged to go in for this expenditure. They formed a company, and provided the means to construct the line. They sacrificed a large amount of capital. The Kamo Company, in which I am interested, has also sunk over £40,000 without the hope of getting any return so far as we can see. Of course, the Bay of Islands Company have also lost a large amount of money.

61. *Mr. Dargaville.*] But they have had their line made for them?—Yes.

62. And the Kamo Company have also had their line made for them?—Yes.

MONDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 1886.

Mr. J. C. BROWN, M.H.R., examined.

63. *The Chairman.*] Can you give the Committee any information respecting this Ocean Beach railway?—The information that I desire to give is as to how it affects my district in particular, and generally the other districts south of Dunedin. The line as at present worked is of no use, except on race- and show-days.

64. *Mr. Gore.*] You mean agricultural show-days?—Yes. What is desired by the country people is that the line should be extended; it could then be worked in conjunction with the arrival and departure of the south train; that is, the south train out from Dunedin. If that were the case, it would enable the country people to come down to Dunedin, and to have a day's "outing," so to speak, at the sea-side. They could also have an hour or two for business in Dunedin; they could avail themselves of both objects. The Ocean Beach is now looked upon as the sanatorium of Otago: a sort of Brighton to Otago. At the present time people avail themselves of it as far as they can, but the accommodation is very limited: people going down to the Taieri Beach where there is a small steamer that conveys passengers to the railway. The accommodation is very limited, not exceeding about forty; and it greatly depends upon the weather; although the cost is much greater than going to Dunedin. I may say the Ocean Beach is preferable for several reasons: it is a large beach where people can have the benefit of the sea-air and also the baths at St. Clair. At present people are unable to transact a little business in Dunedin if they require it. We believe that if this railway were running not less, say, than four trips each way it would be a great boon to country residents. From the information I have received of the company's operations—that is, the Ocean Beach Railway Company—they are prevented from running the line themselves from Dunedin. As I understand, it was at one time contemplated that a site was promised them by the Provincial Government at Crawford Street, which would, if there was a station there, enable the