

tion to say that if a district has suffered a loss of ten thousand inhabitants the colony as a whole would suffer a loss of, say, £5 per head per annum on that population.

152. *The Chairman.*] Have they left the district, or the colony?—The colony; and also they did not come to the colony. Our experience in Canterbury has been that the young people and others who have left there have not left for other parts of the colony, but have left the colony altogether.

153. *Dr. Findlay.*] Since when?—For the last ten or twelve years; and that would mean a loss of something like a quarter of a million. There is a small item, but still it is an item, and that is the cost to the colony of carrying our mails across the Island, and also the passengers. It has to be done in an expensive way now, and, of course, it would be very much cheapened if there were a railway across. Then I come to a very important item, and that is the loss to business people, particularly in Canterbury. Canterbury, as a matter of fact, has been shut out from her natural position, as I may say. The business of the West Coast naturally should belong generally to Canterbury, and we have never had anything from it. It might be argued that this is against the other parts of the colony, but a certain proportion of business is done from Australia—from Melbourne and Sydney and other places. This is more a local loss than a loss to the colony, because it may be argued that the business has gone to other places in the colony; but you could get goods to the West Coast cheaper from Canterbury than from other places. Therefore it must not be reckoned as a total loss, but a partial loss. It is almost impossible to calculate this loss. It is an unknown quantity; but it is a very serious loss not only to the people of Canterbury, but to the colony generally. I differ somewhat from the last witness in one respect. He did not seem to attach much importance to the establishment of townships along the line of railway.

*Mr. Bell:* He did not say he did not advocate townships being established, but that he did not think townships would be established along the line of railway in that district.

*Mr. Louison:* I think there would be townships springing up there, but the question of townships does not apply to Canterbury. The men labouring on the railway would, no doubt, have tried to secure homesteads along the line, and I think there would have been a great deal of settlement along the line, and probably some important townships would have been formed, which would have all helped in attracting population to the district, and their not being there is, of course, a loss to the colony. Then, I think the construction of the railway must have increased the value of land very much in Canterbury, and in Westland too, and I think the colony has suffered an almost incalculable loss from the non-enhancement of land in Canterbury and Westland. Take the line from Sheffield to Springfield, and I know very well as a fact that the land there has decreased in value very much because the railway was not made. Some ten or twelve years ago it was popularly hoped that the railway would be made, and the consequence was that the land there was more valuable than it is at present. If the railway had been constructed this land should have been very much increased in value, and particularly the farming land about Springfield. Of course, one could go on for a long time speaking upon the general loss, but I have given the principal heads.

154. *Dr. Findlay.*] What you have given us is the losses to the colony through the non-construction of the railway. What would be the loss to the company if it had constructed the line?—I do not think there would have been any loss.

155. You took a rather optimistic view of this transaction when it began?—Yes.

156. And you still entertain those views?—Yes.

157. You and the people of Canterbury do?—Yes.

158. You admit your estimates are somewhat conjectural?—All such estimates must be.

159. With regard to this £150,000, you assume that £500,000 would be spent in the colony on material and labour, and that £150,000 would remain in the pocket of the colony?—Yes.

160. How do you make that out? You suggest that about one-third of the whole sum would be profit?—I make it out in this way: I reckon that most of the half-million would be paid away in wages. I do not attach very much importance to the material bought for the railway. Most of it would be for wages, and it is a reasonable calculation to make to say if men are working on that description of work they would save 20 per cent of their wages.

161. Then, your assumption is that if men were not employed on this work they would be idle?—I think a large number of these men would have come from the other colonies. There would have been such a demand for labour on the work that we could not have supplied it.

162. How many men would there be?—I am not an expert in railway work, but I should say there would be a thousand men.

163. For five years?—Yes.

164. Have you arrived at it by anything more than guesswork?—I do not think you should call it guesswork. It is my opinion, founded on the methods employed in the colony.

165. And you think the demand for labour would be largely supplied by people coming here?—Yes.

166. It is only a trifling item, but I ask you, How do you make up this tourist traffic—this extra five hundred tourists a year? Do you suggest to the Committee that the mere fact that passengers would go by railway instead of by coach would bring five hundred extra tourists annually?—I do not suggest that; but if this railway were constructed it would make the Australian Colonies a very much shorter distance from Christchurch and Dunedin than it is under the present circumstances. It would not only be the natural scenery which would attract them, but it would make it a very much shorter distance to come to the colony.

167. Do you say that being able to get from Canterbury to Westland by railway instead of by coach would bring more people from Australia?—I do not say that.

168. Do you charge all this to the railway?—It would have various effects. Supposing a tourist were to make Christchurch his quick point of call, he would leave Melbourne, and occupy