

180. If that land was settled would the county be able to support itself?—Yes.
181. How much a year for the last ten years has it cost the State to do what the county would otherwise have done?—Taking into account the Great South Road down to Okarito, they would have spent thousands each year on the road.
182. Has the non-construction of the railway militated against the miners?—If we could get more people there we should be much better off in respect to the mines.
183. Generally, the non-completion of the line has kept the district back for years?—Very materially.
184. With a loss of population?—Undoubtedly.
185. And depreciation of property?—Oh, yes.
186. Do you say that £100,000 would cover that loss?—Oh dear, no. I think it would be very considerably more.
187. If a statement were made that £250,000 would cover it, would you agree to that?—I think that is ridiculously low.
188. Anybody giving that evidence would not know much about it?—Well, their ideas and mine would not coincide.
189. A person who had not been on the Coast?—Probably.
190. Nobody on the Coast would say that?—No.
191. Is Westland the part which would be most particularly affected?—In my opinion, yes.
192. To persons who have not been on the Coast the disadvantage would appear to be less than to those who have resided there?—Yes, no doubt.
193. An opinion given by a person who had not lived on the Coast and did not know the conditions there would be simply speculative?—Yes.

THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1900.

Mr. THOMAS HENRY BANNEHR in attendance, and examined on oath.

1. *Mr. Bell.*] What are you, Mr. Bannehr?—I am editor of the *Nelson Colonist*, and was for many years secretary to the Railway League in Nelson.
2. Did you give evidence before the Committee in 1893?—Yes.
3. At that time, and also at the time when you were secretary to the Railway League in Nelson, you believed the construction of the railway would be a great advantage to the district, and also to the colony?—Yes; and I am still convinced that it would have been.
4. Before you go into that, may I ask if you have a copy of a speech delivered by Mr. Brodie Hoare at a banquet at Nelson on the 31st January, 1887?—I have an extract from it.
5. That appeared in your paper?—Yes.
6. Will you read the extract to the Committee?—It is this:—

He might say that in London and in the colony he had seen discouraging reports, and when he left London he confessed that he was not without misgivings at the bottom of his heart. He had met croakers here, and a man ready to throw cold water down one's back there, but he was now perfectly convinced that the line could be made, and that when made it would be a great success, so that his firm determination was, as far as in him lay, that it should be made. (Loud and continued cheers.) Gentlemen, he said, his determination would not overcome the difficulties of the Otira Gorge, tunnel through the Arthur Pass, or carry the line through the Buller Gorge. It would require more than the determination of one man to do this, but he assured them of his determination. He had now travelled the length and breadth of New Zealand. He landed in Auckland and went over nearly every yard of the North Island. He then went to Christchurch by steamer simply because he could not do so by coach; and thence he travelled to Riverton, back to Christchurch, and overland to West Coast, and on to Nelson. If ever a globe-trotter saw New Zealand he had, and he ventured to think there were not more than ten men in that room who had seen so much of the colony as he had done. He had inspected crops, seen gold- and coal-mines, and had travelled by rail and by steamer and coach, whilst the more he had travelled the more convinced had he been of the great resources of the colony, and the great wealth that must pass over the Midland Railway. He believed the railway would not only benefit the towns along its route, but the whole trade of the country. He was also convinced that the whole trade of the colony would benefit the railway. He had been asked by his friends to give some idea of his impressions of New Zealand, and would do so. (Cheers.)

7. *Dr. Findlay.*] Where is that taken from?—From the *Nelson Colonist*. The speech was made on the 31st January, 1887, and the report appeared in the paper on the 1st February.
8. *Mr. Bell.*] Now with regard to your own opinion. You know the land in the Nelson District through which the railway would have passed?—I know a great deal of it.
9. Do you agree with the evidence given by other witnesses that a large part of it is suitable for settlement?—Yes.
10. Will you tell the Committee in what respects, in your opinion, giving the heads and, if possible, the items, the colony has suffered through the non-performance of the contract?—In the first place by the prevention of settlement, then by preventing the utilisation of timber, and coal, and gold, and the other minerals which are spread throughout the country.
11. Is it your opinion that the population of Nelson would have largely increased if the railway had been constructed?—Certainly it would.
12. Would it have increased without the railway if this block on settlement by the reservation of land had not been made?—Yes.
13. Without that blocking do you think the gold industry would have been developed?—Yes. There is a large extent of country in which there is gold, perhaps not sufficient to warrant its being worked by itself, but in conjunction with settlement it would have enabled people to make money out of it. There are the Tadmor Valley, and the Sherry Valley, and other valleys containing gold.
14. You say the condition of trade and commerce remain in the same condition as they were in 1880, when you promoted the league, as far as communication between coast and coast is concerned?—Very much so. The coach service has been improved, but otherwise the conditions are the same.