

239. Is there no other produce on that line—no fruit, for instance?—No fruit is brought down.
240. Nothing but wool and firewood?—Yes.
241. Hops?—I have not heard of any hops coming down.
242. *The Chairman.*] You have not been here in the hop season?—No.
243. *Mr. McKerrow.*] Is there no through traffic to the West Coast by that line?—As far back as Murchison. We are sending dredging plant to Murchison.
244. *Mr. Graham.*] You do not know the whole of the traffic for the different seasons of the year?—No.
245. *Mr. McKerrow.*] I suppose the records of the office would show that?—Yes.
246. *Mr. Hudson.*] I want you to say from your knowledge of the district what you consider the future prospect of this railway is from the point of view of the existing traffic?—That is, between Belgrove and Norris's Gully?
247. Yes, between Belgrove and Norris's Gully, but not necessarily the traffic which proceeds from Belgrove to Norris's Gully, and which comes from there. I mean the traffic passing over the line as it is to-day: to what extent is that likely to be increased, say, within the next ten years?—Well, of course, I ought to have some knowledge of the back country to answer that question properly; but, speaking locally, I do not think the traffic would increase any more than it is now.
248. Do I understand that you do not consider there is any prospect of increase of business on the existing railway?—From the knowledge I possess I do not think it will.
249. *The Chairman.*] That is, under present conditions?—Yes.
250. *Mr. Hudson.*] And that is looking ten years ahead?—Yes, I think so. I fail to see that the traffic will increase very much, if at all.
251. *Mr. McKerrow.*] Can you give us the average number of passengers per train on that particular portion of the line?—I should not think more than about six or eight. Of course, some trains carry more, and some are practically empty.
252. *Mr. Hudson.*] Does the revenue derived from the business generally exceed the working-expenses?—Well, of course I can only speak from the figures shown in the Railway Statement.
253. Do you not deal with the pay-sheets yourself, and with the expenditure?—Yes, I pay the men; but I cannot tell without going into books.
254. Do you not render a return every month of the revenue?—Yes, over the whole section.
255. Of this particular portion?—No.
256. Can you not say from your own particular knowledge?—No.
257. *Mr. McKerrow.*] Does it require more men to work the line now, with this additional mileage?—Yes.
258. How many platelayers are there on that length?—There is one gang of four men between Motupiko and this side of the tunnel, and then part of a gang is stationed at Belgrove, and go from there up to the junction.
259. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us on the average what it costs per mile to maintain that railway during the year?—No, I cannot.
260. Do you not keep any records?—It is not kept that way. It is kept in Wellington.
261. The chainage is as near as possible five miles and a half?—Well, it would take four extra men to work that portion all the year round.
262. How much do you pay them?—There are three men at 7s. a day and one at 8s.
263. *Mr. Hudson.*] You have a Stationmaster at Motupiko?—Yes. There is a proportion of the wages of guard, engine-driver, fireman, cleaner, and Stationmaster at both Belgrove and Motupiko which is chargeable to this portion of the line.
264. *Mr. McKerrow.*] The traffic over this line will go over the continuation of the old line to Nelson?—Yes.
265. That traffic would ordinarily, supposing that continuation had not been made, still go over the main line and be carted to or from Belgrove?—Yes.
266. So there would be no increase to the Belgrove-Nelson line?—No.
267. *The Chairman.*] You mentioned something about tarpaulins being part of the plant; what was the value of the ten tarpaulins when new and on the 23rd July, 1900?—I cannot tell you the value new or when we took them over. I should say about £2 10s. If they were worth £2 10s. new, they were not worth more than £1 10s. when we took them over.
268. Can you tell me on which line the Belgrove Station is supposed to be—on a portion of the Midland line or on a portion of the Government line?—It is certainly not on any portion which was worked by the Government.
269. There is a mile-post a little above the station along the Midland Railway?—That would be twenty-two miles from Nelson.
270. Do you chain from the Port?—The mile-posts are from the Port.
271. You carry mails along this section?—Yes.
272. Do you charge the Postal Department?—Yes.
273. And you also carry Government officers?—Yes.
274. You do not include these officers amongst the number of passengers?—No. I do not suppose we carry a postal officer once in six months.
275. But there are various Government officers—the police, for instance?—Yes.
276. Do you take holiday parties up to Motupiko?—Occasionally.
277. Do they augment the revenue much?—Excursion parties are generally carried at cheap rates, and really there is not a great lot made out of them.
278. Suppose the Midland Railway stopped just at the end of the first bridge below Spooner's Range, what do you think would be the value of the section of the Midland Railway as a going concern?—I cannot estimate.