

56. How many trains run from Dunedin to Lawrence now?—Well, there are, from Dunedin to Lawrence, and *vice versa*, two regular trains.

57. Could the same men run the same trains and work the line, and would the rolling-stock do?—Well, the engines that are now in use certainly could.

58. Could the same men do the work?—I think so. They might require a little extra assistance.

59. Are you familiar with the fruit-growing industry throughout the colony?—Oh, well, I have read a great deal about it, of course. I am not speaking from observation.

60. I suppose through Canterbury, and even Otago, there is a good deal of fruit-growing. At the present time how many trains do you think would be required every day to carry this fruit during the season?—I suppose a good deal would depend upon the capacity of the train.

61. Would there be 200 tons for each train?—You have in the petition 700 tons in the season.

62. The petition says, "That Roxburgh and Coal Creek are the largest fruit-growing districts in Otago, and at present, under very great difficulties, send large quantities of fruit to the southern and northern markets, between 70 tons and 80 tons per week being carted over forty miles of bad road to the railway during the season. With railway communication such as your petitioners suggest the industry would be enormously developed, as there are immense areas of land suitable for fruit-cultivation which could be profitably utilised for that purpose under cheaper and more rapid conditions of transit to market." So that under the present conditions the fruit-growing industry would not pay to make a railway?—Not alone, of course.

63. Do you agree with the opinion that ten eight-horse wagons could carry all the traffic of this district all the year round—that they could carry everything?—I certainly do not.

64. What horse-power do you say is required to carry on the traffic?—Unless I made inquiries I could not give you a reliable answer. My answer on that point would be very approximate. I know the traffic is very large. There is an immense traffic.

65. What population do you consider would be served by this railway, then?—It would serve the whole population through forty miles of country from Lawrence.

66. There might not be another forty or fifty people in the whole forty miles of country from Lawrence?—Oh, yes, there are.

67. How many do you think there are?—I could not say exactly; it is a very large district.

68. Can you say approximately?—Between four and five thousand people.

69. This is the Tuapeka County?—Yes.

70. What is the population of the county?—Over five thousand.

71. That includes Lawrence?—Yes, in which there are about eighteen hundred.

72. What is the nature of the country through which the line would go: is it level?—Yes, level country, and sheep country, I should say, through which the railway would be constructed.

73. *Mr. Flatman.*] Can you tell the Committee what is about the average weight or approximate weight that is carried by each of the ten-horse teams that you say are working on the road?—Their loading is very light owing to the state of the roads. A ten-horse team will not carry a large load owing to the state of the roads.

74. How much do they carry—give us an average, approximately?—3 and 4 or about 5 tons.

75. And how many teams are there? Do they traverse the road each week?—Their stopping-point is not at the end of this proposed railway-line; they go right up country.

76. To Alexandra: do they go as high up as that?—Yes.

77. You could not say how many teams there are?—Oh, no.

78. *Mr. Sidey.*] How long have you resided in Lawrence?—I have been there for twenty-four or twenty-five years.

79. Were you there before the present railway was constructed?—I was not there.

80. Have you a good knowledge of gauging the feeling of the people of Lawrence?—Yes.

81. Do you think that this railway would be of great advantage to Lawrence itself?—I do, and especially to the business-people there.

82. Is it not a fact that when a township is the terminus of a railway it receives even greater advantages than if the railway was carried through, because, once a railway is carried through, the traffic instead of stopping there goes right on?—I do not think so in this instance. The people will be recouped by those who will come down for years. Owing to the state of the roads people never attempt to go up.

83. Do you not think that the people would go right into Dunedin then?—Oh, no.

84. How about the feeling in Roxburgh? Are you in a position to know what are the feelings of the Roxburgh people?—They have been active in agitating for bringing the railway from Heriot. They took up that position because they believed the most of the people were opposed to the extension of the line to Lawrence. At the present time I should say they are quiescent.

85. You think the Roxburgh people have no feeling with regard to the route?—They prefer the Lawrence route, certainly.

86. You referred to the traffic—the traffic that has hitherto passed through Lawrence: does that traffic not come right down from Alexandra?—Going where?

87. Has not the merchandise and the produce of the country that has come down to Lawrence and been sent on to Dunedin in the past come not only from Roxburgh, but from higher up?—No; the chief stream of traffic is going up country. What comes down is comparatively small.

88. Has not a very large amount of the traffic going up been not necessarily for Roxburgh, but for places beyond Roxburgh?—Oh, some of it has.

89. A good portion of it has?—It is light.

90. Do you not think it is a fact that this has been the only means of getting up to the Lake—up by Cromwell: is it not a fact that those who used to go up to the Lake *via* Lawrence went by this way?—Oh, yes.

91. Are you aware that by pushing along the Otago Central line better it will tap Alexandra?—Yes.