

should be, and, therefore, the owners prefer to drive them instead of taking the roundabout way. We also send to the north—to Wanganui—and that is still more roundabout. The distance saved from Bull's, going south, would be twenty-four miles; from Sandon, going south, the distance saved would be twenty-two miles; going north, fifty miles; from Foxton, going south, thirty-four miles, and north, twenty-two miles. I would like to mention, also, that the timber is now all practically cut out of the district, and they will have to import coal for their factories. There is another point which I think ought to carry weight with the Government, and that is that the Manawatu County Council has never received anything in the shape of grants or Government assistance for the roads or other things that our neighbours have received. I mean in this way, that in the early days in the Rangitikei County, for example, they received very considerable subsidies on their rates. Then, after subsidies were reduced, the local bodies got a share of the land revenue, but the land was all disposed of in the Manawatu County before the Manawatu County Council came into working order, so they had no opportunity of getting it either way. What has been done has been done entirely by ourselves. There is no Government money spent on railways south of the Manawatu River, and if we can only get nine miles constructed it will serve for the metal and will be of great importance. It is ruinous for local bodies to try and metal these roads. We found it was absolutely necessary to put this tram down northward for the metal alone, and if we could get the southern piece put in it would be of more convenience to us and of great assistance. I do not know whether I should be right in making a suggestion, but I know what would be satisfactory to us, and that is, if we had the line authorised right through, and the Government would make some agreement with the councils to take over the tram, not necessarily now, but at some future time, and if they would construct the small portion south of the Manawatu River so that we could have an outlet to the Port of Wellington, that would serve us for a considerable time. The connection north could be made at some future time, and the tramway taken over by the Government when convenient.

40. *Mr. Lawry.*] Do you not think the railway would be better and more complete if continued on to Longburn?—Longburn is quite out of the line.

41. I mean when you get up to Bull's?—Not from Bull's. Longburn is right off the route altogether.

42. I mean Greatford?—Oh, yes; Greatford is the place we want connected. Mr. McKerrow's report suggests connecting at Marton, but all that is necessary for us is from the point marked on plan; he also estimates for eleven miles at the south end, while nine miles will be sufficient for our purposes, and five miles will be sufficient the other way. Some time ago a deputation interviewed the Premier at Levin, and he said it would be only a short time before this line would have to be duplicated. It would be far better to take the line from Levin to Greatford than to duplicate the other line.

43. *Mr. Wood.*] You said that would serve new country—what new country?—Is not the country all settled?—The country is all settled, but not served by railway.

44. All the land is now settled upon?—Yes.

45. Are they large or small holdings?—Nearly all small holdings—the majority.

46. What is the size of the holdings?—From 50 acres (about Rongotea) up to 200, and then some run a bit more than that, up to 500, 600, and 1,200 acres, and then there are one or two that go into a few thousands. Mr. McKelvie has more and Robinson has more, but there has been a great deal of subdivision; the Carnarvon Estate has been subdivided.

47. What was the size?—Some 8,000 acres.

48. What is it now?—I think the largest one would be 400 acres down to 100 acres.

49. Are there not some of 1,000 acres?—Yes; I believe Rowe Bros.' is 1,000 acres, but they have subdivided that again, and there are now seven or eight families on Rowe Bros.' estate, and they have a creamery in the middle of it.

50. If this line was put as you suggest, would it improve the value of the property?—Of course, it would be an improvement to the property right into Wellington, and even along by Palmerston.

51. Do I understand that your preference is that the line should go from Foxton to Levin?—Yes; from Foxton to Levin, but preference to what?

52. Preference to any other portion of it?—Yes; I think that would suit most settlers, but, as a matter of fact, it would be better if we had an outlet both north and south. We have a small piece in the middle that we cannot get the full use of for want of a proper connection.

53. Would it not be better with the connection made from Bull's to Greatford?—I do not know whether it would be better; it certainly would be good. It is part of the through line.

54. Would it be shorter?—It would be shorter to Wanganui.

55. And a convenience for carrying stock?—That would be all right going north, but it would not serve for stock going to Wellington. It would serve going to Wanganui. I think it would pay better to first put the railway in the country where there is no metal.

56. Would it not be better to construct it from Oroua Bridge to Linton?—That would not shorten the distance at all.

57. It goes to Oroua Bridge now?—Yes.

58. Or to Tokomaru?—I do not think there would be much gained. You would have to go through the Makarua Swamp.

59. Well, take it to Linton?—We should only gain two or three miles, and we should have to run along the flooding portion of the river, and there would be nothing cut off. There is a railway runs along on the other side now.

60. Instead of going roundabout to Foxton from Himatangi to Foxton and going round Linton again, is it not very much shorter from Oroua Bridge to Linton than it is from Foxton to Levin?—I should be ashamed to ask the Government to construct—

61. Is it shorter?—It would shorten it I think only about two or three miles.