

62. You spoke about the metal for the roads being very expensive. What did the Manawatu County Council put the extension on to the present tramway for a short time ago?—Chiefly to get to a metal-pit.

63. To get metal from the Rangitikei River?—Yes.

64. To supply the whole of this place that you say the Government should build a line to supply?—No, sir.

65. You can get metal at the present time?—North of the Manawatu River we can, but south of the Manawatu River there is no means of getting it.

66. But you can get metal from south of the Rangitikei River and take it down to Himatangi?—Yes; and we can get it right into Foxton, but then it has to be carted nine miles from Foxton towards Levin.

67. Do you know there are any amount of districts in the colony that they cannot get metal to at all?—I dare say. I should say the best thing would be to put a railway in or to allow ratepayers to do so.

68. Do you know there was a line applied for to get to a gravel-pit, and it was not passed—the petition was not agreed to?—Yes. I suppose you refer to Egmont, and I hope it will pass this session.

69. Do you know that people have been burning papa in order to make roads?—Yes.

70. Yet you have the convenience with a little cartage. The question is have you got the convenience to carry this metal and to cart it?—No; because we have no convenience south of the Manawatu River.

71. That line of nine miles from Levin to Foxton belongs to Foxton?—No; it belongs to the Horowhenua County.

72. Is there no metal in the Horowhenua County?—Yes; there is some at Levin.

73. That is nothing to do with you as far as your county is concerned; it does not mean the expense of bringing the metal all the way from Rangitikei but the expense of bringing it down this nine miles?—We intended to bring it from Levin. This line would serve that purpose, also as an outlet for the district for our produce, and it would serve as a through line for the whole colony.

74. Have you not another through line from Wellington?—A roundabout line; this is a through line. It would simply mean shortening the distance for live-stock, &c. I have known trains to be delayed overnight with live-stock, and the Secretary for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has insisted on the trains being unloaded, which means expense. For live-stock it would be a great saving right through.

75. You do not ship your live-stock to Foxton at all?—No.

76. Then the contention that the line going to Foxton would benefit Foxton and would also be a benefit to shipping is not your idea at all?—Not for live-stock. There would be very little live-stock shipped to Wellington. It would be put on the train and go right through, but wool, &c., is shipped at Foxton.

77. You do not think it would be a benefit to you so far as the live-stock is concerned. If the line were from Bull's to Greatford, a distance of only three miles, which would shorten that distance considerably, would it not benefit the whole of those people who are bringing stock now; would it not help them considerably to take it from Bull's to Greatford?—It would be of great assistance to have a connection from Bull's to Greatford. Last year I sent sheep to Wanganui, and I had to drive them to Halcombe, so that it would be a great saving to have the connection at the north end also.

78. If you have it on the north end you have already your connection on the south end?—Yes, in a roundabout way.

79. *Mr. Lang*: I would like to know if you could tell me the difference in the distance in the present route from Greatford to Levin and the proposed route from Greatford to Levin?—Roughly, fifteen miles—between fifteen and sixteen.

80. And going northward from Greatford there are two lines available?—Yes.

81. And going southward from Greatford there is only a single line to take the traffic until you come to Palmerston?—Yes.

82. Going north from Greatford when you come to Marton the two lines join. This proportion of the line you propose would relieve the traffic of the other line?—Yes; it would be far more satisfactory to construct that line to relieve the other than to make a duplicate line.

83. What about its construction from an engineering point of view?—It is practically level from Greatford right through.

84. There are no engineering difficulties on this line?—None whatever. There are two rivers to bridge, and by the other route there are three rivers.

85. *Mr. Wood*.] You just now said that if another line was put down it would relieve the other line?—Yes.

86. There would be two lines to take the traffic from Wanganui and New Plymouth and also from Hunterville, and another line would relieve all the heavy traffic?—Yes; it would take a share of the through traffic.

87. And you would pick up the extra traffic and put it on to the single line at Levin?—Yes. I am going by what the Premier said, that as the traffic was increasing so much there would have to be a duplicate line. I have a *Gazette* return showing that the receipts per mile on the Wellington-Napier-New Plymouth Section of the railway is far greater than on any other line in the colony except two short lines to the coal-mines. The receipts were £1,200-odd per mile, far greater than anything else shown in the colony. That is including the branches to Greytown, the branch to Wanganui, the branch to Waitara, and the Toko-Stratford Branch, and when the main trunk line is right through the traffic will be enormously increased.