

9. *Mr. Buick.*] You say that the grades on this line are better than those on either the Johnsonville or Rotorua lines?—It is 1 in 35 on the Rotorua line and 1 in 33 to Johnsonville.

10. Are there any pinches?—The ruling grade is always the steepest, and the steepest on our line is 1 in 35.

11. *Mr. Buchanan.*] What are the curves?—1 in $1\frac{1}{2}$ in a chain-and-a-half radius.

12. Are you aware that the Wairarapa line is of 5-chain radius?—Yes, the Government standard was a 5-chain radius, but it is now, I think, 10.

13. Would you not then anticipate a Government objection to a chain-and-a-half radius when the Government limit is, say, 5 chains?—That, of course, is for a heavy line. It is entirely a matter of speed.

14. Speed and power: you have great friction in getting round sharp curves?—With this exception, these sharp curves are absolutely flat. Mr. Fulton laid out the line, and it was arranged that we could straighten the line to 1 in 35 as a maximum grade. That is the design of the line.

15. *Mr. Buick.*] Did I not understand from your evidence that the company were prepared to straighten some of these curves?—Yes. The money referred to—from £5,000 to £7,000—would be expended in doing that. The sharpest of the curves would be taken up.

16. *Hon. Sir J. Findlay.*] You have considered Mr. Coom's report and recommendations?—Yes.

17. You have noted that he says in his "Recommendations and Suggestions," after inspecting this line, "Taking the whole line throughout, the track is well maintained, and, with the exception of the sharper curves, which will regulate the speeds, is quite fitted for twenty miles an hour, which is fixed by the Order in Council"?—Yes.

18. How many of these sharp curves are there?—There are only two of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain radius.

19. Mr. Coom says, "The original specification provides that the sharp curves should be so laid that they could be easily improved. It is evident that this has been done in some cases, but without an inspection of the plans and sections of the line as completed it cannot be said that the condition exists throughout." The final conclusion he arrives at is this: "In a general way I might remark that I was surprised to find the line and works so efficiently maintained. There is nothing in the condition of the track to-day, with the exception of the narrowness of some of the banks, to which any objection can be raised. As I have pointed out, these can be widened at a small cost, and I should have no hesitation in giving a certificate that the line is fit for passenger traffic at moderate speed, say, twenty to twenty-five miles an hour on the straight lines, as soon as this has been done." Then he sets out the alterations and additions, which he puts down as a whole at £675?—Yes.

20. You have Mr. Fulton's idea on the matter as well?—Yes.

21. Can you tell us what sum would be necessary to make these sharp curves quite safe for passenger traffic?—They are safe to-day for passenger traffic. It is only a question of speed. You must remember that the curves on our street tramways are very much less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain radius.

22. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Down at the Railway Offices in Wellington the speed of the trams has to be reduced very much to enable passengers to get on them?—Yes. The total length of these sharp curves is very small compared with the total length of the line.

23. *Hon. Sir J. Findlay.*] My object will be served by a general answer. What maximum sum will be required to enable this line to be travelled on in safety by passenger vehicles running sixteen miles per hour?—£5,000; but we have to guarantee to the English syndicate that the line will not cost more than £180,000 approved for passenger service. We went into it very thoroughly, and our estimate was that it would cost £5,000; but to be safe we included in the estimate £7,500.

24. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you use any ballast other than pumice sand?—No. It is the same ballast as is used upon the Rotorua line.

25. Is it in contemplation to use any other ballast than the pumice sand?—No, there is no other ballast in the district.

26. *Mr. Buick.*] Proposals 1 and 2 must be looked upon as purely alternative, and the company is prepared to accept either?—Yes. Mr. Buchanan asked yesterday about the rise and fall of Lake Taupo: I am informed by Mr. Crowther that it never exceeds 3 ft., and that there has never been any trouble in serving the wharves. I was also asked by Mr. Crowther to say that he made a mistake in stating that 30 acres were under wheat at the place he indicated. He tells me that he should have said it was nearer 300 acres. He was also anxious to come before the Committee to say that he was in no way connected with the Taupo Totara Timber Company. Mr. Buchanan also asked yesterday as to the ownership of the private lands through which the private line runs. I can now give the whole of the ownerships of that country. The first portion of the line from Putaruru to some miles beyond Lichfield was formerly the property of the Bank of New Zealand Estates Company. That is now called the Selwyn Estate. That went out for about ten miles along the company's line. It was purchased by the Government, and has been cut up since the company commenced its operations, and the whole of it has been settled. Mr. Barnett said there were about a hundred settlers on it. The whole of it is not on our line; portion of it is on the Government line. The next property—the Tokoroa Block—has been purchased by a Canterbury syndicate, which has been during the last two years engaged in surveying the land for the purpose of roading and subdivision. That contains about 20,000 acres.

27. Is any of that land taken up yet?—It has not been put on the market yet. I understand it is to be placed on the market shortly. The next block is an education reserve of nearly 20,000 acres: that has not been occupied. Then there is the Maraetai Estate, which formerly belonged to the Bank of New Zealand Estates Company. That was sold a few years ago by the bank for 3s. 9d. an acre, I think. There are about 50,000 acres in that, and that is also in