

5. Would the information you gave last year be the same as you hold to-day?—Yes. I made one slip. I thought the line was built with second-hand rails, but I find it was laid with new 30 lb. steel rails. You will find that I made the correction.

6. You have been over the line?—Yes.

7. Do you think it could be made suitable for passenger traffic at a cost of £5,000?—No, I do not.

8. Or £7,500?—I should put it at a higher figure.

9. What would you put it at?—£15,000, approximately.

10. That is, running with the ordinary New Zealand railway engines?—No, you could not work that line with our ordinary rolling-stock without reconstructing the greater portion of it.

11. And you would have special engines?—Special rolling-stock; and the £15,000 I have mentioned is simply for the improvement of the formation and permanent-way. In addition to that it would be necessary to provide a much better station equipment. If the line is to go to Taupo a terminal station will be required there, and there must be a goods-shed, station-house, engine-shed, cattle-yards, a water-service, and houses for the employees. On the Government lines the standard is about one man to the mile for the maintenance of the track, but as the traffic will be light on this line one man to two miles will probably suffice; but you must have maintenance-men, and houses for them to live in. I think the station equipment and houses will cost another £15,000.

12. You will want special engines and special carriages?—Yes. If the line is to be equipped for passenger traffic it must have rolling-stock specially equipped for the curves.

13. And special carriages?—Special rolling-stock would have to be used.

14. You would have to tranship on to the Government line?—I think you would have to tranship everything you put out at Putaruru.

15. Do you think the banks are wide enough?—No.

16. They would have to be made wider?—Yes.

17. Would that be included in the £15,000?—Yes. The special equipment of rolling-stock, engines, curves, and so on would cost about £40,000. I have only allowed for four locomotives, but I think that number of engines would be required for passengers and mixed trains. The present rolling-stock would be required, in addition, for the company's timber traffic. I think you would need £40,000 worth of rolling-stock in addition to the rolling-stock there now.

18. What speed would that enable passenger-trains to be run at?—An average speed of about fifteen miles.

19. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] Do you know the line?—I have been over it once.

20. Is it constructed, apart from the actual work, as the Government would construct it—I mean the road? A private company might take a detour to avoid a hill, whereas the Government might tunnel it?—The first part of the line is laid out all right, but they have $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain curves on the latter part, and the minimum on Government lines is $7\frac{1}{2}$ chains. They would have to construct parts of the last part of the line over again.

21. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] Is the length of that considerable?—I should think it was fully one-third of the line. But, of course, that line could be worked with $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain curves.

22. *Mr. Hindmarsh.*] But it is contrary to experience?—It is contrary to usage on New Zealand lines. But there are railways in existence with $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain curves worked with passengers every day quite successfully.

23. *The Chairman.*] In last year's evidence a question was put to you, "You want a heavy rail to carry a heavy engine, and you cannot get a high speed without a heavy engine." That is obvious, is it not?—I think so.

24. Would this line, strengthened as you say, enable you to get a heavy enough engine to haul the traffic round those curves?—With $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain curves it would be necessary to run comparatively short trains.

25. Is there any other information you can give us?—I do not think so. I presume the Committee intends to call Mr. Holmes.

26. Yes, but we want all the information we can get generally upon this matter?—Mr. Holmes has been over the line comparatively recently, and has studied it much more than I have. He is better able to give you information than I am.

27. In your opinion light railways are quite practicable?—Quite practicable.

28. But they want special equipment?—Yes.

29. *Mr. Wilson.*] It is not necessary for heavy trains to act as light feeders?—They would be prohibited from going on lines acting as light feeders. It would be possible to get special equipments for light lines, but the capital cost must be taken into account.

30. *The Chairman.*] Taking the ordinary goods-trucks, you would not require to shift the goods from the loaded trucks on a light feeder?—I think not. We have some long trucks which I do not think would go round the curves, but I think you could use the shorter trucks with bogeys even on the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -chain curves.

31. *Mr. Wilson.*] There are a good many light tramways running in the north?—They are not authorized to carry passengers.

32. *Mr. Dalzell.*] You are not the engineering head of your Department, I think?—That is so.

33. You have to do with the commercial side of it?—Yes.

34. In fact, you control the commercial side of it?—That is so.

35. You know the nature of the country we are referring to?—Fairly; I have been over it once.

36. You are not a farming expert?—I do not profess to know anything about land.

37. But you think it is very poor country?—A good deal of it was poor country in my opinion when I went over it.