

Statement by Mr. INNES. (No. 22.)

Mr. Innes: The present might be a convenient time for me to put in a list of the objections taken by the local bodies represented by me. The objections are from Palmerston North and Feilding Boroughs, Kairanga County Council, Oroua County Council, Kiwitea County Council, and Pehangina County Council.

LOCAL BODIES' OBJECTIONS.

As to the Proposed Railway-deviation.

1. The proposed line is not required in the public interest, and would be an expensive and unnecessary luxury.
2. The proposed line would open no new country, and would not effect the closer settlement or subdivision of existing holdings.
3. The population to be served by the line is small. Such population is now well served by good roads, and are all within easy distance of markets and railways.
4. The line would be costly, and any small benefit that might accrue would not be warranted by the expenditure.
5. The proposed line would not pay.
6. Many other lines are urgently required and are entitled to precedence.
7. Such line would seriously inconvenience the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay districts.

As to the Proposed Extension of Tram-lines.

1. That it is undesirable in the public interest to connect tramways with the railway system.
2. That the cost of such extension would not be justified by the little benefit to be obtained.

WILLIAM STRODE PENNY sworn and examined. (No. 23.)

1. *Mr. Luckie.*] You are a farmer residing in Sanson?—Yes.
2. And you have been there practically all your life?—Yes, I was born there.
3. You know the whole of the Manawatu district thoroughly which has been referred to by Mr. Phillips?—Yes.
4. And you agree with him in regard to the report* that was put in this morning as to those areas of property comprising altogether 41,705 acres in nineteen holdings?—Yes.
5. And all capable and suitable for subdivision?—Yes.
6. The statement which was put in by him was prepared in collaboration with yourself?—Yes.
7. There is a reference in one of the later paragraphs of the report to a large number of properties of about 500 acres which are suitable for subdivision. Do you know how many of those holdings there are?—Forty.
8. And the total area?—About 21,000 acres.
9. There are total areas amounting to over 62,000 acres held at present in about sixty holdings which are capable of subdivision and closer settlement?—Yes.
10. And you agree with this statement as to the number into which the 41,700 acres could be subdivided?—Yes.
11. A total of 301 farms supporting as many families in place of the nineteen?—Yes, and the forty extra holdings would also subdivide to areas of about 100 to 200 acres.
12. In your opinion would that subdivision be induced by the extension of the existing tram to Greatford or Marton?—Yes, we would get our produce away better—that is, oats, wheat, and chaff. The chaff which is burnt now would find a market.
13. In your opinion is there an increasing demand for that class of produce from your district?—Yes.
14. And that is due to what?—To the development of the country to the north. It is higher country and they have harder winters, when they are required to feed their stock.
15. Then you have a similar demand from Taranaki?—Yes.
16. And also from a large part of the Auckland Province?—Yes, and that is growing.
17. And in your opinion is it likely to be permanent?—Yes.
18. And is this the most suitable class of country for supplying this demand?—Yes, it is very suitable.
19. Why is it particularly suitable for growing that class of produce?—It is land that requires cultivation, and to get the best results from it we have to cultivate it.
20. And that is the natural course adopted in the growing of the crops such as you have mentioned?—Yes.
21. That is independent of the dairying industry?—Yes.
22. Would the dairy industry also be beneficially affected by this connection?—Yes, by renewing the pastures every few years you get more grass and the stock do better.
23. And they would have better communication for the stuff imported and the stuff sent away?—Yes.
24. What, in your opinion, is it that at present prevents the possibility of this district competing successfully with the farmers in and about the Marton district in the chaff and grain export business?—The extra railage through Sandon, Himatangi, and Palmerston North to Greatford.

* See Mr. Phillips's evidence, questions 9 and 10, and Exhibit 20.