

9. Which is the more profitable to the farmer—if he can do it satisfactorily from Levin—to separate or send the milk?—If the conditions are right, to send the milk would pay the best. That is what all the farmers are doing who live near Levin.

10. In what portion of the year do they do that?—Some of them do it all the year round, and some of them only in the winter. The factories run all the year round.

11. With the present prices in Wellington, the tendency would be to increase that practice?—Yes.

12. But the difficulties of access to the railway-line prevent them from sending sufficient milk in?—With those far back it is too far: they cannot get there. They use their skim-milk for feeding the calves and pigs.

13. In your opinion, would more intense dairying set up a larger population?—Yes, if the land could be got for cutting-up purposes.

14. Your farm on the railway-line would not be affected?—No. I know all this country and I have been over practically every chain of it. I have been stock-dealing there for twenty-four years.

15. Do you know what the cost of carting chaff is over the distance Mr. Nicholson mentioned?—It is pretty expensive. I think the figures he gave are correct.

16. *Mr. Innes.*] Are you dairy-farming at all?—No, stock-dealing.

17. And you sell no cream or milk?—No.

18. Have you a freehold property of your own?—Yes, about a mile from Levin Station, on the other side of Levin, straight behind the township.

19. Do you think the construction of this line would improve the value of those large places that you say are suitable for subdivision?—Most certainly it would.

20. And bring more money to the owners of the property?—I should say so.

21. Is that one of the reasons why the land is desirable?—The land is desirable in a good many ways, I take it.

22. Is that a considerable factor in the matter, that it would increase the value of the properties?—It would increase the value of the place generally, and bring more settlers.

23. You say these properties you mentioned are suitable for subdivision?—Yes.

24. Then why do not they subdivide?—That is unknown to me.

25. If the owners are willing there is nothing against subdivision?—No.

26. And the railway would not make it any better or worse?—The railway would make it much better. The owner might not get the same return now as he would if he had the railway running through, and that might cause him to subdivide.

27. No part of that land is more than four miles away from the railway-station at present—take Grace's?—Grace's homestead is not within six miles of any railway.

28. Can you point out where Macdonald's estate is? How far is it from Levin?—At present it is over three miles from Levin Post-office.

29. Do you suggest that the railway is going to make any difference to that being cut up?—That is the nearest portion of it. That is nothing to the miles it runs back.

30. Do you know anything about the dairy-farmers separating their cream—do you not know that it is a constant practice in that dairying district for the farmers to separate the milk because they find it much better to do that and take the cream to the factories two or three times a week?—That is where they have bad roads to contend with, and live some miles back.

31. I suppose you know nothing about the price paid for milk and cream in the Levin district?—No.

32. Do you not know why the man who sells his cream to the factory and lives five miles away gets the same price as the man who lives close to the factory?—That may be, but that is not the case with the Wellington supplier.

BASIL ROBERTSON GARDENER sworn and examined. (No. 30.)

1. *Mr. Skerrett.*] You are Town Clerk of Levin?—Yes.

2. At the request of those in charge of this case you have prepared certain statistical information from the year 1896 down to 1911-12?—Yes.

3. And you have prepared some observations upon the point of the advisability of connecting Marton and Levin by railway with the Main Trunk line?—Yes. [Statement put in—Exhibit 17.]

4. It is, of course, a fact that the residents of Levin desire this connection between Levin and Marton?—Yes.

5. I suppose you concede that but for the connection serving some purposes in connection with the Main Trunk line it would be futile for the residents of Levin to ask for its construction?—Yes.

6. It is as part of the Main Trunk line that the Levin people advocate its connection and construction?—Yes.

7. *Mr. Myers.*] In your statement you speak of the saving in cost of running trains. Have you taken into consideration that extra and special trains would be required to be run between Levin and Marton with the present line for the purpose of making the connections?—No, it is not necessary, because naturally there would be trains running between Wellington and Palmerston, which would practically suit the people along the Manawatu line.