

Transcript: Hedley Evans recalls a discussion with engineers at the New Zealand Electricity Department during the 1970s.

“One good example, I guess, of the engineers’ attitude was, they’d say, “What are you? A landscape architect? Well, what have you got to do with transmission line location?”

I said, “Well, how do you decide where you’re putting your transmission line?”

He said, “Well, we’ve got a substation at this point on the map and at another point many kilometres away, we’ve got a point of supply we need to get the power to. So, we grab a ruler and we rule a straight line between them and build it. If you think that we need to increase the length of that line and increase the cost, you’re going to have to really justify any variation from that straight line.”

And I said, “Well, look at the example of the transmission towers down the Desert Road, right between the main road and what is an internationally outstanding view; Mt Ruapehu etc.” I said, “Surely, that must be considered to be a major mistake.”

They actually explained to me they were very proud of their engineering feat, the way that they created this massive - completed this massive - engineering challenge and got it beautifully built. And here am I having the gall to come along and say that it’s in the wrong place.”

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