

115. If the railway is brought over here so close to the Wairoa waters, it is not likely to get as much trade, do you think, as if it were taken right up through the centre? Is it not the people in the centre of the peninsula that will require railway communication more than the people close to these navigable waters?—It is my personal opinion that a railway-line should keep as far as possible from navigable water.

116. By adopting the authorised route through the centre that would be accomplished?—Yes.

117. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] You told us that you would prefer the western route had the western people not got water communication. Do you not understand that by touching deep water at Young's Point you would give access to the railway to all those people on the borders of the Kaipara estuaries? and would not that be a very great source of revenue to the railway?—I think that any one living, we will say, in the region of Batley and outside that would prefer to go to Helensville instead of coming back and incurring the greater railway distance to get to Auckland.

118. Do you mean to tell me that people living at Batley would be going back when they went to Young's Point?—Certainly.

119. How far are they from Young's Point?—About then miles, I should think.

120. We have other points touching the Kaipara waters, but I take it Helensville is the only one that is of service to the Kaipara people?—Yes.

121. At Young's Point there is water for vessels of considerable size, is there not?—Yes.

122. In going to Helensville do the people not then have to use the railway?—Yes.

123. Do you know anything at all about the Port Albert fruit traffic, which only last season was going by steamer to Helensville?—I am not intimately acquainted with it.

124. Do you know that Port Albert is considerably nearer to Helensville than Young's Point is?—Yes.

125. It is on another river altogether?—Yes.

126. If the fruit trade of Port Albert has ceased to go by steamer and is now going by railway, is not that an indication that the present water communication is not satisfactory to the people?—I believe that Port Albert people are sending their fruit up to the train because they are not very far away from the train; also they are able to place the fruit in the railway-trucks themselves, instead of having to intrust it to strangers to handle at Helensville Wharf. It saves damage.

127. You do not agree that a bridge at Young's Point would block navigation?—It would block some navigation.

128. It would not allow a "Dreadnought" to go through?—No.

129. But it would not block the navigation that is going through there at the present day?—It would block the scows that are at present going up above there to obtain kauri logs.

130. You do not know how many scows that would have affected in the last year or two?—There was one there the other day when I was there.

131. You made a survey of the eastern route. Did you follow Mr. Knorpp's survey? Did you take Mr. Knorpp's survey of 1885 as a guide to your survey of the eastern route?—Approximately, but I did not go upon it entirely. We satisfied ourselves by re-examination of the country that we were following the best route along the eastern side.

132. When was the western survey made?—We had a trial line made from Bickerstaffe northwards just after last Christmas.

133. Until then no survey had been made of the western route?—A survey had been made across to Bickerstaffe some years ago.

134. From where?—Topuni.

135. And no further?—No.

136. Therefore you practically had not surveyed the western route until after Christmas?—That is so.

137. But before that you had stated your preference for the eastern route. You once said that if we got down to the level of sea-water at Young's Point it would be impossible to get up. Did you say that, or something to that effect?—It would be impossible to get into Maungaturoto. Maungaturoto was the objective, some years ago, before the question of going to Paparoa cropped up.

138. Your statement to that effect was made because you were trying to reach Maungaturoto?—Yes.

139. You were not considering a main trunk line?—Oh, yes! but a main trunk line passing through Maungaturoto.

140. How far does the main trunk line go now from Maungaturoto by the western route?—Three or four miles.

141. Maungaturoto Post-office—is that where you take your stand from?—About there.

142. And how far is the eastern route, as surveyed twelve months ago, from the Post-office?—I could not say exactly, round the road, but the Maungaturoto Railway-station would be just close to the English Church at Maungaturoto, on the cross-road.

143. My point is simply this: that until after Christmas you had made no survey of the western line?—Not beyond Bickerstaffe.

144. The other part—up to Bickerstaffe—is a very small portion, is it not?—Yes, of the whole route.

145. Have you considered the two routes in reference to a direct line from Topuni to Mangakahia?—Yes.

146. You went through with the Minister, I believe, what they call the western route?—Yes.

147. Were you not impressed with the country in that direction?—Yes.

148. It is very fine country, is it not?—Yes.

149. Taken as a whole, is it not very much finer country than the other, from a settlement point of view?—I would not be prepared to answer that question.