

150. From, say, Topuni, how many miles of country would you go through that is poor country? Is it not twenty miles or more before you get into population, leaving out Maungaturoto?—I do not think there is much to pick and choose between as far as the country is concerned, if you except the Tokatoka Swamp and the piece of country that Mr. Riddle is holding. All the rest of it is good and bad mixed.

151. What settlements are there on the eastern side of Maungaturoto?—Waipu, Hakaru, Mangawai, Kaiwaka.

152. The line goes through Kaiwaka by either route, does it not?—Yes.

153. On the other side, I am talking about?—There is a very fine piece of country known as the Tara.

154. What extent of country is that?—I should not like to say.

155. Is it more than 2,000 acres?—I could not say.

156. Do you know the settlements on the western side at all?—Yes, I have been out through Matakoho and Paparoa.

157. And Batley?—I have not been quite into Batley.

158. There are several settlements on the western side, are there not?—Yes.

159. *Mr. Mander.* I should like your opinion with regard to this proposed compromise, Mr. Holmes. [Suggested compromise explained by reference to map.] Do you not think that would be a sensible compromise to make?—It is hardly for me to say, I think.

160. If it met all the people over there [district indicated] equally well, would there be any sense in going to extra expense by taking the line round that way [indicated]?—I should prefer to go *via* the eastern route to Maungaturoto and down the Paparoa Stream and join the western route there. You would get as near to the Paparoa people.

161. Would you not get as near to the Pahi people and all the others on that side?—Yes, they would have to come through Paparoa.

162. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.* Mr. Mander pointed out the line across these creeks [indicated on map]. Is it not a fact that part of the railway is already finished?—Yes.

163. It was practically finished before I went over the route at all?—Yes.

164. Now, coming to this enormous curve shown on this map, is that curve in the western route at all, as laid down and adopted?—No, it is not that shape. The other map shows it accurately.

165. Is that curve there at all?—It bends off.

166. Is not the curve shown on this map a distortion?—Yes.

167. Now take this map. The deviation starts at this point, 77 miles 30 chains, and from here to Young's Point you have practically a straight line?—Yes, fairly straight.

168. As to the question of navigation at Young's Point, how far is it from where you cross Young's Point up to Kaiwaka?—Not very far.

169. Could they go up two miles further?—I presume three miles further.

170. And to Maungaturoto?—About two miles further.

171. That is all the navigation that we should close?—Yes.

172. You reported in favour of the eastern route some years ago?—Yes.

173. You are aware that the railway was authorised some years ago? You see here, in a schedule to the Public Works Act, that a section on the Helensville Northwards Railway was authorised, I think in 1904, from Maungaturoto to Maungatapere Parish?—Yes.

174. Were you Engineer-in-Chief then?—No.

175. Did you report to the Government in favour of going to Maungatapere Parish at any time?—The first time that I reported was in 1907.

[Route discussed on plan.]

176. You reported in favour of this route [indicated] in 1907?—Yes; I was dealing then only as far as Maungaturoto.

177. That was after it was authorised? You reported in favour of it after it was authorised?—Yes.

178. And that authorisation carried you to that point [indicated]?—Yes.

179. Why did you not stick to that? Have you ever been authorised to deviate from it?—No.

180. So that, to carry out the letter of the law, if the line were continued on the eastern route, it would have to go to that point, would it not?—Yes, strictly speaking.

181. You reported in favour of the eastern route: were you ever over this part [indicated] of the western route before or at that time?—I was not over the western route when I made the recommendation in 1907 that the eastern route should be adopted as far as Maungaturoto.

182. Or should be adopted altogether?—No, I did not make any recommendation beyond Maungaturoto.

183. You made a statement before a parliamentary Committee last session that the eastern route is the better?—No, I was not before the Committee last session.

184. As a matter of fact, when you recommended going eastward of Pukekaroro you did not know which would be the better route as a whole?—No, not as a whole.

185. With regard to ballast, how much do you pay the Railway Department now for ballast?—It costs us about 6s. delivered.

186. Is it not 5s. delivered on your line?—It is costing us 5s. on the railway-trucks at Wellsford at present, and we run it ourselves.

187. So it is really costing you now 5s. You made a statement that the difference would be as between 3s. 6d. and 7s.?—The 7s. was for the Hukatere ballast.

188. For how far does the eastern line run at the foot of the Waipu Range?—About twelve miles.

189. Are you sure it is not twenty-five?—It is not that.