

190. When you recommended that route, do you know whether the intention was to connect the railway with the Whangarei-Kawakawa line when the authorisation was passed?—No, I am not aware.

191. Can you tell the Committee, then, whether from here [point indicated on map] to the Whangarei-Kawakawa line there is an easy line to be got?—I would not say you could get an easy line across.

192. Do you know the country?—I have just been across it.

193. It is flat country?—It is undulating.

194. Supposing the Government decided on connecting this line with the North Whangarei line, and making the Whangarei line a section on the North Auckland Main Trunk line, how much construction would be saved?—You would save practically the whole length of the line through from Whangarei to Kaikohe.

195. Say thirty miles?—I should think so.

196. Would that be a reasonable proposition for the Government to put forward, to connect with the Whangarei line and use that portion as part of the North Auckland Main Trunk line?—I do not think so.

197. Why?—It is too near the eastern seaboard for the Main Trunk line. It would be better to take the Main Trunk line up the centre of the Peninsula.

198. Can you tell us the distance of the authorised line from Whangarei?—I could not say.

199. I am told it is nine miles?—It is more than that, I should say.

200. Even if it is fifteen miles, by doing that you would save thirty miles of railway-construction. Do you think that that influenced the Government at that time to authorise the railway to this point [indicated]?—It may have been so. I could not say at all.

201. You said that detailed plans from 37 miles 30 chains to Young's Point were ready?—One set of detailed plans.

202. You have not submitted them to me yet, have you?—For part of the way, I think, they have been submitted—as far as Kaiwaka.

203. But not as far as Young's Point?—No.

204. So that there are no detailed plans finished beyond Kaiwaka?—No.

205. At the time you reported to the Government on this line was there any possible data available by which you or Mr. Stewart or any other engineer could estimate, except as a rough guess, what the cost would be?—No.

206. It would be a purely rough estimate?—Yes.

207. So that neither Mr. Stewart's views, nor your own, as far as the cost of construction is concerned, are of much value?—It is not close estimating.

208. It might cost a thousand or two a mile more or even less?—Yes.

209. So that, when Mr. Stewart submitted yesterday that the western route would cost £93,000 more than the eastern route, he had no data on which he could base an estimate?—No.

210. Such data is not in existence?—No.

211. So that, speaking from an engineering point of view, you would have no hesitation in stating that that was a pure guess on Mr. Stewart's part?—Yes.

212. I think Mr. Stewart made a statement in connection with the cost of the bridge across Young's Point. I understand he said it would cost £36,000. How much do you reckon it would cost?—I estimated the cost at about £24,000.

213. Coming to this slipping country that Mr. Stewart referred to, whereabouts is it?—A short distance beyond Young's Point.

214. What is the angle of the ground? Have you got the railway cross-sections there?—We have cross-sections along the line.

215. Have you got the cross-sections of the formation along that particular part?—I am not sure.

216. So that possibly the line may be located on level country when Mr. Stewart reckons it is on country liable to slipping?—I know it is not level.

217. What would the angle be?—It varies a good deal; anything from 2 to 1 down to level.

218. Have you any idea how far it would be from the Maungaturoto Post-office to the site where the railway-station is located now?—No, I have not gone into the question of locating the railway-station.

219. I have, and find it is a mile and a half—that is, on the western route. How far would your station be from the Maungaturoto Post-office on the eastern route?—About a mile, I should think—perhaps more.

220. With regard to the ballast-siding, at present there is no authority to deal with that ballast-siding in any way as far as you are concerned?—Not the construction.

221. You have no Ministerial authority to do anything in connection with it?—Only to get some information.

222. It may never be used?—That is so.

223. You know there are several samples of ballast down at my office at the present time?—Yes.

224. Some are satisfactory and some are not?—That is so.

225. And you also know there is an outcrop of rock near Paparoa within about half a mile of the route of the railway, and there is also ballast to be got near McCarroll's Gap?—No, I did not know about that.

226. And, of course, when you get up beyond Waikiekie there is a mountain of ballast?—Yes, at Maungakaramaea.

227. When these matters were under consideration you submitted to me a table of the rises and falls?—Yes.