

228. Can you tell us which line has fewer rises and falls on it, and has consequently the easier grades?—The fewer rises and falls were on the western route.

229. By a considerable amount?—About 100 ft.

230. You also submitted to me the length of tunnelling on each route?—Yes.

231. Did you report to me that there were 41 chains more tunnelling on the eastern than the western route—that is, from the point of deviation to the point of junctioning?—Yes, I think that was the case.

232. And did you report to me that there were 740 ft. more bridging on the eastern than on the western route?—No, not on the eastern. There was more bridging on the western route, I think.

233. I am including viaducts. However, I will leave the point, and you can refresh your memory. You did not go into the statistics of this matter from a commercial point of view?—No.

234. Were you familiar with the country when Mr. Knorpp made his survey in 1885?—No.

235. Would it be fairly well covered with timber at that time?—I believe it was.

236. There is a difficult piece of railway coming in here [place indicated on map] through that gorge?—Yes.

237. Round here between Bald Hill and Pukekaroro it is very rough country for railway-construction, is it not?—Fairly rough for a mile or two.

238. I suppose it is impossible, taking this line as a whole from point of deviation to point of junction, for any one to say what the approximate cost would be by either route?—That is so. I should not like to hazard an opinion.

239. Do you think there is any other engineer in New Zealand who could do it?—No.

240. No one has anything but the configuration of the country to go by, as seen by going over it, and, of course, your trial surveys?—No.

241. *Mr. Mander.*] Having considered both sides and examined both routes, are you still of opinion that the eastern route is the best from an engineering point of view and from the point of view of the best interests of the country?—I have already answered that question.

242. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Mr. McKenzie put a question as to whether, prior to giving an opinion that the eastern route was the best, you had an opportunity of coming to a conclusion as to the western route, and your answer was that you had not—you had never been over the ground. Did that apply to the whole of the western route or only portions of it—in other words, had you been over some of the western route?—I had been over some of it.

243. To what extent?—Just round about Maungaturoto.

244. So that your opinion expressing preference for the eastern route was come to with a passive knowledge of the western route?—I made two reports on this matter—one in 1907 which dealt with the part of the line up to Maungaturoto, and subsequently one dealing with the whole.

245. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Was your report dealing with the whole railway made in 1907?—No, this year.

H. J. H. Blow, Under-Secretary for Public Works, examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Have you any statement to make, Mr. Blow?—No. After the very full evidence Mr. Holmes has given I do not know that there is much I can add; but if there is any question you wish to ask me, I shall be pleased to answer.

2. *Mr. Pearce.*] Which has been authorised, the eastern or the western route? There is an authorisation of the eastern route shown on that map: is that so?—No. There is an Act of Parliament authorising the construction of a railway to Maungaturoto, but the route is not defined.

3. We had a letter, signed by yourself, read yesterday, regarding a railway-station site at Kaiwaka. In it you stated that the site was fixed. This was in reply to an inquiry by the County Council asking that the site be fixed as early as possible to enable them to make roads to the station. Would you mind pointing out that site?—May I see the letter? [Letter handed to witness and read.] “Referring to your telegram of 28th ultimo, asking that the site of the proposed railway-station should be fixed as early as possible, to enable the County Council to proceed with the construction of roads in the vicinity, I am directed by the Minister of Public Works to state that the site has now been fixed and is shown on the plan forwarded herewith. It is situated a little to the north of the tunnel passing through the ridge on which is a district road, joining the main road near the accommodation-house. The precise route of the approach road to the station has not yet been finally decided upon.” This is dated the 5th October, 1908.

4. Whereabout is that proposed station?—At Kaiwaka.

5. Is that below the proposed deviation?—It is beyond the point of deviation.

6. Which is it on—the eastern or the western route?—I am afraid I cannot say. That is an engineering point. The plan is here, and it may speak for itself. It is just below Kaiwaka that the deviation starts.

7. Which route was it fixed on?—It must have been on the eastern route, because at that date there was no proposal to go by the western route.

8. Then we are to understand that the Department had actually decided where the site of the railway-station was to be on this eastern route?—Yes.

9. Now they propose to deviate it from that line altogether?—Yes.

10. Do you know whether this County Council have made roads to the station-site, or have opened up the country to the railway-station?—I do not think they have; but I would point out that the letter says, “The precise route of the approach road to the station has not yet been finally decided upon.”

11. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.*] Are you acquainted with the country which these two routes go through?—I have been over the eastern route, but not the western.