

42. Anyhow, that survey has been undertaken since?—Yes.

43. And now a Proclamation has been issued revoking the original Proclamation, and proclaiming a portion of the new route?—Yes.

44. And work is proceeding on the new route at the present time?—Yes.

45. *Mr. Mander.*] In calculating the population on the eastern side of this route, did you take in the whole of the Otamatea?—I did not calculate it. I got the information from the Registrar-General.

46. Are you aware that the whole of that part of the Otamatea County down to Mangawai, which lies eastward of the route, was included in calculating the population on the western side?—As I say, I did not make the calculation, consequently I cannot explain the details.

47. In calculating the population to be affected by a main railway-line which will carry cattle right into the Auckland market, do you think it fair to leave out twenty-three miles from the coast on this eastern side because there is a little railway leading to the water, and to include the whole of the population on the other side, when there is there a beautiful river leading to the railway?—I think it would have been absurd to include the population of Whangarei, considering that the district between Whangarei and Kawakawa is or will be served by its own railway and a daily steamer to Auckland, with a deep-water wharf at both ends of the line.

48. Is not the other side served by a beautiful river connecting with the railway?—No, not all of it.

49. Are the cases not parallel?—I do not think they are at all parallel. Of the population you refer to on the western side, many have an opportunity of getting down to the Wairoa River, but many of them will be quite as near to the railway as to the river, and it would be quite as easy or easier for them to take their traffic to the railway as it would be to take it to the shipping-place on the Wairoa River. Then, if they send it by water they have got to pay wharfage, and freight it down to some convenient station on the railway, and then in the end to pay railway freight; so I think they would take their traffic straight to the railway. On the other hand, traffic from the Whangarei line will never come to this line at all.

50. Do you suppose that the people who raise cattle and sheep up here [place indicated on map] will ever put their cattle on this short railway to go to Whangarei and ship them on to Auckland?—I think that the volume of traffic derived from the Whangarei-Kawakawa Valley by this railway will be very small indeed.

51. Do you not know that in all cases where a railway goes through a district the people naturally feed it as much as possible—to go to the market as direct as possible?—There will eventually, I have no doubt, be a connection between this line and the Whangarei Railway.

52. Is not that a good way in the future?—I should think not.

53. Are you aware that the calculation made in regard to population on the eastern side excluded the population on the eastern side twenty-three miles from the coast? There was a straight line drawn across from the Kirikopene Valley. Are you aware that twenty-three miles from the east coast was excluded from the calculation, and only ten miles from the Kirikopene Valley, where the railway is to cross, was included?—I can only give you the same answer as before—namely, that I am not responsible for the figures, and cannot explain them.

54. Are you aware that, if the railway crosses at Kirikopene as proposed, it will be only twelve miles from the main Wairoa River on the western side and thirty-three miles from the east coast on the other?—Those figures are probably fairly correct.

55. Do you think that is the way to reach the people in the centre—by putting the railway so far to one side of the country to be traversed?—I think a railway should be located as conveniently as possible for the bulk of the people who will require to use it.

56. Do you not think the people in the centre of the peninsula will be the most likely to use it?—Yes; but it very much depends on what you call the “centre.”

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WEDNESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 1909.

JOHN ALEXANDER WILSON, District Engineer of Public Works, examined. (No. 8.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you make a statement of what you know about this railway, or would you rather be asked questions?—I would prefer to be asked questions.

2. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are you in charge of construction of the Main Trunk line north of Auckland?—Yes, as far as the boundary of my district, which is about McCarroll's Gap. Then the North Auckland district comes in.

3. Is there any other engineer in charge on the section further north than that?—Not on any section that is under consideration.

4. Are you well acquainted with the rival routes, east and west?—Yes.

5. Which do you consider the better line, taking all things into consideration, such as cost of construction and maintenance, and the facilities afforded for the transport of goods and passengers generally?—I consider the western route is preferable from the points of view you have mentioned.

6. First, as to cost of construction: Are you in a position to give a reasonably approximate estimate of the cost of construction, comparing one line with the other?—I have formed an estimate in my own mind from examining the country and the plans, but I have not seen the official estimate.

7. Is there any data available as to both routes which would enable you to form a reliable estimate of the cost of the two lines?—Yes, there is data that would enable a reliable estimate to be formed. A trial survey has been made of each route, which enables a reliable estimate to be formed for comparative purposes.