

144. If you made an embankment there, that would be an everlasting job, would it not?—Yes.
145. It would last much longer than the bridge would?—Cylindrical piers filled with concrete would make a fairly permanent job.
146. Which do you think would be more permanent—they or an embankment faced with stone?—You could not have anything more permanent than the embankment. I dare say it would last out the piers.
147. As far as Young's Point, or 84 miles, do you think there is much difference in the cost of the two routes to that point, or is one cheaper than the other, the mileage being the same?—You mean to include the bridge?
148. I include the bridge?—That is hardly a fair comparison. You would require to cross over the bridge on to this side.
149. We propose to put a station at about 87 miles. Supposing you take 87 miles on either line—but before you answer that let me ask you this: You know the eastern railway route between Pukekaroro and Bald Hill?—Yes. You mean beyond Rock Creek?
150. Yes. What do you think of that piece of country for constructing a railway?—It is an expensive piece of formation.
151. Is there anything on the western route to equal it, do you think?—No; I think that is the most expensive piece of formation on either route, right up to the Gap.
152. At the end of that gorge, what is the nature of the country there? Would it be of a slippery nature, do you think?—I think it is fairly good standing country, but expensive to construct a line through.
153. I mean when you get through, from the saddle—before you go down into the valley on the other side?—I do not think there is slip ground up there.
154. Taking both lines, say, to Maungaturoto, how do they compare as to cost of construction?—I should expect that to Maungaturoto, perhaps, the balance would be in favour of the eastern route.
155. Taking them right through to McCarroll's Gap, which is 20½ miles, how would they compare?—By the time they reached McCarroll's the cost would be about the same. It would be no more on the western than on the eastern route.
156. Beyond McCarroll's Gap there is no definite information available in connection with these routes, is there?—Oh, yes! A trial survey has been made.
157. There was no definite information available in connection with the western route, say, until within the last six months?—No, there was no information until then.
158. From an engineering point of view, no one could say till then which was going to be the most expensive to construct or which was likely to be the most serviceable for the people of the country?—No.
159. You are familiar with this country?—I know it fairly well.
160. Which do you consider the more central from the point of deviation to the point of junction in the Mangakahia Valley? Which has the bigger area of settlement and also of land—to the eastward or to the westward?—I think the western route serves the population better and settlement better.
161. The contention is that the line ought to be made more central if possible. Do you think there is more country on the west side of it than on the eastern side?—I think it is fairly central.
162. Is it a good deal more central than the line shown in red on this map—the eastern route?—I think it is more central.
163. You have had a line from Whangarei to Kawakawa under your control?—Yes.
164. And you know the Mangakahia Valley?—I know about it, though I have not been there.
165. Do you know whether there is a high range of hills between the Whangarei-Kawakawa line and this line that would go up the Mangakahia Valley—I mean, down to about Maungatapere?—There is high country there which divides the Mangakahia from the country to the east.
166. The Whangarei line is on the eastern side of that range?—Yes.
167. Supposing this line were made, do you think it would ever command any traffic from the eastern side of that range, or would the traffic go to the Whangarei line?—From the eastern side, I should hardly think it would go over that range into the Mangakahia Valley.
168. Not until you got up to Kaikohe?—No, I should not expect it to do so.
169. So that this line is never likely to get any traffic from the eastern side of the range till it gets that far?—No, I should not think so.
170. Does this eastern route not follow the foot of the Waipu Range from Kaiwaka to McCarroll's Gap, a distance of twenty-two or twenty-three or twenty-four miles?—It gets close into the range at Pukekaroro at about 84 miles, and it keeps fairly close to the foot of the range from there to McCarroll's Gap, at 98 miles.
171. Is there much settlement before you go over the range?—Very little, I think.
172. Is there any settlement at all there?—There would be a few farms on the eastern side of it.
173. Would this eastern route draw traffic from between the top of that range and the railway-line if it were made along the foot of that range?—From between the top of the range and the railway-line there would be very little. There is just an odd settler here and there.
174. You know the country to the east of the range, at Waipu and along that district—along the east-coast side of the range?—I have been at Waipu and have been through the settlement.
175. Have you been from there towards Marsden Point?—No.
176. But you know the road-lines?—Yes.
177. Which would be the best way for the traffic on the eastern side to get an outlet, even if this line were made?—They would still have the outlet that they have at present, and they could come to the railway, if they wish to do so, at McCarroll's Gap. I refer to the Waipu people.