

213. It required a branch line in any case?—Yes.

214. Of course you would get your authority to lay off the station-yard at Kaiwaka through the Engineer-in-Chief?—Yes.

215. You do not know whether it was authorised by the Government?—I got my authority, I believe, from the Engineer-in-Chief.

216. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is the Committee to understand that if the western route is followed, a long quarry-line for metal will not be necessary at all?—Yes, in my opinion it is not necessary—I mean, the quarry-line from Pukekaroro.

217. That is to say, if the matter were left to your discretion you would ballast the line?—Without going to Pukekaroro.

218. *Mr. Mander.*] When you start to deviate at Kaiwaka, going past Pukekaroro, you go through very fair country as far as Pukekaroro—Ross's farm, and Clark's farm, and all those places?—It is country that you might expect some slips in, I think.

219. But from an agricultural point of view it is very fair country?—Oh, yes!

220. You get to Pukekaroro and you go through a gorge there: how far is it to Brynderwin?—About a mile and a half.

221. When you get into Brynderwin, do you not strike very good country there?—I suppose that is good farming country.

222. As good as any north of Auckland?—Yes.

223. And then you go through Maungaturoto—through very good country?—Yes.

224. And you leave Waipu, with its very bad harbour, about nine or ten miles to the eastward?—Yes.

225. And then—adopting the eastern route—when you get to Mareretu you come alongside the range there?—Yes.

226. What would be the nearest point you would get to Paparoa by the eastern route, as already authorised?—I suppose it would be about ten miles.

227. From Waipu?—To Paparoa, from the eastern route.

228. Are you aware that the Paparoa people intend to make a road up to what is known as Rogers's, at the Wairere, whichever way the line goes?—I have heard that.

229. Is it not a fact that it is only about two miles altogether from this line?—It is close on two miles and a half, according to the plan here.

230. How close to Paparoa would that bring the line?—About four miles.

231. And how far would it be from Waipu at the nearest point?—Nine miles.

232. Would not this point [indicated on map] catch the whole of the people at Pahi and from the other side who wished to reach it?—They could come that way.

233. Would not that be just as beneficial to everybody in that quarter [indicated], except the people at Bickerstaffe and Whakapirau?—I should think it would suit them to go to the station at Wairere.

234. In regard to the ranges, supposing you went straight on, you are aware of course that there is good country all along the bottom of that range?—Yes, but you are on the fringe of it.

235. Are you not aware that this rough country at the back, towards Waipu, is pretty well settled?—No, I did not know that it was settled.

236. In Waipu alone there are 837 people. Are you not aware that Waipu harbour is a very bad one, and that vessels are frequently stuck up?—It is not a good harbour.

237. Are you not aware that by the road to Marsden Point it is fourteen miles from Waipu, and that this is a very bad road, almost impassable for heavy traffic?—I do not know what the distance is to Marsden Point.

238. Are you not aware that all the people at Bickerstaffe and round about Whakapirau have good water communication?—Yes, they have water communication.

239. Do you not think that would be a good compromise to make [proposed route explained on map]?—There is the objection that it would add to the length of line by over two miles.

240. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You had a trial survey made of this line that Mr. Mander has pointed out?—Yes.

241. And it was condemned as being impracticable, was it not?—It is a fair route.

242. For construction, yes; but I mean from an engineering or public point of view?—It was condemned, I believe, because it added so much to the length of the line.

243. So there is nothing new in what Mr. Mander wants?—No.

244. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] Could not the Bickerstaffe people much more easily get to Young's Point than they could to Wairere? Is it not much better for the railway to touch at Young's Point? Is not that much better than the suggested deviation would be?—I am not so familiar with all the details of those Sounds as you are.

245. Would not the Pahi people have to pass through Paparoa to get to Wairere?—Yes.

246. They would be much nearer to Young's Point than to Wairere?—It would probably be easier for them to take launches and go to Young's Point.

*Mr. Pearce:* I should like to ask Mr. Holmes, as he is present, whether he had the authority of the Public Works Department to fix the station-sites that have been mentioned—sites on the eastern route?

*Mr. Holmes:* The usual departmental practice was followed in choosing the best site to serve the Kaiwaka district. There is really only one spot where you could put a station at Kaiwaka.

*Mr. Pearce:* Mr. Wilson said he was instructed to fix the site by you, as Chief Engineer. That was by instructions, was it?

*Mr. Holmes:* The station-site would be shown upon the plans that would be sent out from the Head Office, approved of, for the construction of the line.

*Mr. Pearce:* Approved of by the Public Works Department?

*Mr. Holmes:* Yes.