

12. Do you know the country north of Hokianga River?—Yes, to Mangonui and Kaitia.
13. Is that good country?—Yes, on the west coast. On the east coast it is worthless.
14. Supposing the present proposed central route was not adopted, these people would be served by the Whangarei-Hokianga line?—Yes.
15. Are you aware that it is something like twenty-five or thirty miles longer route by way of Whangarei than would be the case by the proposed central route?—Yes; and I am also aware that from McCarroll's Gap to Kaikohe is a long way, fifty or sixty miles, by any line, and the present railway to its present terminus has come from Helensville at the rate of one mile per year, so that it would not worry any one living in Hokianga to have to wait for the country to be developed before the line reaches him. That is my reason for advocating the Whangarei connection—namely, that there is no possibility of the line reaching Hokianga in the lifetime of any one living there now.
16. What is the distance to construct between the rail-head and the Gap?—Twenty miles from where the train now starts.
17. And twenty-seven miles to Whangarei?—Yes.
18. So that at the rate of a mile a year it is no concern of any of us when it gets to Whangarei?—That is so; but in the last two years the rate of railway-construction on this line has been four or five times faster than it was previously.
19. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] What Native land lies between here and Kirikopuni on the west of the Tangihuas?—Practically none.
20. If the line was making for Whangarei do you not think it would have been just as well to let it go the way it was going originally to the east of Maungaturoto?—No.
21. There was an advantage in bringing the line here?—Yes.
22. Was not it lengthening it?—No; and if the line was going to Whangarei it would have served the whole country better by going several miles away from the original eastern route. I consider that both the original eastern and western routes were in the wrong place.
23. What distance are you from the Mangonui Bridge on the Tokatoka-Mangapai Road?—As the crow flies, I do not suppose it is more than fifteen or sixteen miles, but by road it is between twenty or thirty miles.
24. How far is that bridge from the Wairoa River?—About twenty-five miles.
25. There is about thirty-five miles of extent of country between here and the Wairoa River?—Yes.
26. You say that the northern junction of the two lines is in the Kirikopuni Valley: would you call Kirikopuni beyond Parakao?—There is not much difference between them.
27. If a junction is made at Parakao it is a long way from Kirikopuni?—Yes.
28. In that case do you not think it advisable to construct a railway through that portion of the country?—That is what I said. The ideal route would be through the centre of the country and up the Mangakahia Valley, but under existing circumstances I thought it better to make a connection with Whangarei.
29. Do you think the people to the north would be willing to go twenty-five miles farther for all generations with freight and passengers in order to get the line through by way of Whangarei?—Not for all generations.
30. That would be the effect of taking the Whangarei-Kawakawa line as the main route?—When the centre of the Island is settled there would be more inducement to continue the line from the junction northward.
31. In a country like this the reason for making railways is not so much the obtaining of revenue as the opening-up of undeveloped country?—There is a lot of country in this part of New Zealand which has been opened up for the last fifty years, and there is no sign of a railway.
32. What has been the progress of that country, owing to the want of a railway and roads?—It has been practically stagnant.
33. If you had had a railway twenty years ago, what would have been the condition of this country?—It would undoubtedly have been very different.
34. You seem to advocate that because there is a line from Whangarei northwards it would be better first of all to connect the Gap with Whangarei?—Yes, to give the people north of Kaikohe railway communication with the rest of the North Island.
35. If those people ask for a central line in preference to that connection, what then?—Give it to them.
36. They are quite able to talk for themselves?—Yes.
37. At the Gap here you are ninety-eight miles from Auckland; add twenty-seven miles to that, and how far would it take the line?—In the neighbourhood of Kirikopuni.
38. Would not that be most useful for opening up the country?—It will be very useful.
39. Would that bring Mangakahia within eight or nine miles of the rail-head on the direct route to Auckland?—Mangakahia is a very big district. It would bring Parakao within twelve miles of the line, but there is all to the south and north of that in the valley. Part of the valley is nearer Kaikohe than anywhere else, and another part is nearer to Whangarei. The valley is about thirty miles long.
40. If the Mangakahia people state that they would prefer the line coming within eight miles of them, do you not think they have a fairly reasonable idea of the question?—Certainly. The population in any district will advocate the railway that goes nearest to them. They would be foolish if they did not.
41. How would the settlers within fifteen miles of Kaikohe be connected with a railway at Whangarei?—Only by road.