

51. Would it be correct to say that in that expanse of country from the Wairoa River to the Tangihuas there is not one formed road right through?—I do not think there is. If there is one it has been formed recently. At one time we had to go round through Waipu, Maungaturoto, and Mangapai to get to Wairoa, and then we were only ten or fifteen miles from where the cattle had been running, and we had been driving for a week.

52. Would the country west of the Tangihuas be a payable country to rail as compared with other districts in the Dominion which have been railed?—I have visited nearly all the provinces, and do not know a district where there is such a chance of opening up good land as there is between McCarroll's Gap on the western side and Kaikohe on the northern side. It is the best land I know of in the country.

53. And it is capable of carrying a settler to every 200 acres?—Yes; and it is more suitable for dairying than for sheep.

54. *Mr. Steadman.*] What land are you referring to?—I am relating my own experience on land similar to that opened up by Mr. Harding, where they have had equally good results, down by Kirikopuni and Awakino.

55. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] When you stated that the land is capable of carrying a family to every 200 acres did you not refer to the country between McCarroll's Gap and the west of Kaikohe?—Yes.

56. Then, it is not so hilly and broken as we have been led to understand?—I do not consider it too broken for cattle.

57. Do you consider that the same district is served by the Wairoa River as far as connection with Auckland is concerned?—I do not. The Wairoa River runs fifteen or twenty miles away from a lot of this land, and the railway will serve those places just across the river, and trade will be brought to the railway. I do not suppose the line touches the river anywhere within fifteen or twenty miles except where it crosses it at Kirikopuni.

58. If the Kaihu line were connected with the Main Trunk at Mangakahia or Kaikohe, would that open up much country that would be fit for settlement?—It would: from Taita to the Awakino and right up to the eastern side of Tutamoe. If the line went on to Kaikohe, it would open up a large block of good land.

59. Is it private or Native land?—Most of it is Crown land. Above Mangakahia I think it is Native land, and it is full of *teraire*.

60. *Mr. Steadman.*] How do you know it is *teraire*?—I have gone through those bushes myself and have seen that timber there.

61. Where did you get the piece of timber from which you exhibited to-day?—A man gave it to me, and said he had sawn it up in 1880, and I would as soon take his word for it as that of any other man.

62. It was the word of a Maori?—He is a Maori chief of very good repute, and I would take his word for anything.

63. Are you sure it is *teraire*?—I have shown it to competent judges, and they all agree that it is.

64. Do you not think that if that timber was suitable, as you say, for certain purposes it would have been found out before, and used by the settlers?—It has not been used before because we have had so much kauri timber.

65. Do you know the Whatitiri district?—I cannot locate all the places according to the names.

66. Do you know the Maungatapere district?—I do.

67. What kind of land is it there?—Volcanic land, growing large quantities of *teraire*.

68. What has it been used for for the last thirty years?—Largely for grazing. Some of the settlers have grown oats.

69. Do you know Maungakamea?—Yes.

70. There are a great number of settlers there, are there not?—Yes.

71. Do you think a railway depending on the carriage of stock only could be made to pay?—I am not going to say that the western route would depend on stock entirely, but I do say that the western side would produce 90 per cent. more than the eastern side.

72. Taking Maungatapere from Maungakamea, Whatitiri, and Maunu, do you say there is any land on the west coast that is as good as the land in those districts?—The latter is an excellent district, and close to Whangarei, but there are lands on the western side equal to Maungatapere, and I would prefer them to it.

73. Do you think that the difference of five miles on either side of a certain line of country weighs with people to the extent you indicate when selecting land?—No; my contention is that there is a big area of land close to the Tangihuas, which is fit for settlement. It is held by the Crawfords, Gunsons, and Babes; but taking the other twenty miles I have spoken of to-day beyond that, the land is comparatively useless. For some of it I would not give 1s. per mile.

74. Do you say that strip of good land extends to only a mile on the eastern side?—I am taking the average at a mile.

75. Do you contend that there is no good land a mile away from the proposed eastern route?—There may be patches, but, generally speaking, these are surrounded by poor land.

76. Do you know the area of the Whatitiri land?—Yes.

77. Do you know that a large area of the good land there was bought by the Government at £3 5s. per acre?—That is good land there, but I am not sure about the area.

78. Would you be surprised to know that it extends for six miles from the eastern route?—I think that piece of land would be better served from the western side than from the eastern.

79. Would not the settlers then have five miles farther to go?—There is a good road.

80. Do you wish me to believe that that land would be served by the railway just as well as if the line were over on that side?—I do not think there is much difference between the two routes as regards distance.