

22. You will have a connection when the line is through to Kaikohe and the construction completed to Kawakawa?—I grant that; but it will not be a paying line unless it takes the course I indicate.

23. You think the country is of such a fertile nature that the building of a branch line from the Mangakahia to Opua would be justified?—Yes.

24. In addition to the communication you already have with Kaikohe?—Yes.

25. Is it not possible to work the State forest by floating the logs down the rivers?—Yes. I have had a great deal of experience in timber, and I know that the timber you cut and cart from the forest is worth 1s. 6d. per hundred more than the timber you have to depend on the flood-waters to carry down.

26. For what reason?—For the reason that there is no chance of losing the timber, and the sap is not damaged.

27. Have you considered the freight from the bush to the mill?—Yes; my opinion is a mill should be put in the bush, where the timber should be cut. The timber could then be sent in all directions where it is required by the settlers. For shipment it would be railed to the Wairoa and shipped from Kaipara Harbour.

28. Where would you get your produce from in the event of this line being made?—From Auckland, *via* the Main Trunk.

29. Would you get your groceries, such as flour and sugar and everything required, by rail from Auckland?—Yes, anything within a reasonable radius of the railway. The cheap freights from the south now depend on the timber industry, which is a diminishing one, so naturally we shall have to rely on the rail from Auckland.

30. Then later on, when the timber supplies are exhausted in the district, there will be no cheap return freights from the South Island?—I suppose so.

31. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] What is the bush you speak of at Patakarau?—It is a climatic reserve.

32. You know that locality: if the timber were available, would it be sent out by the eastern or western route?—The natural course of that timber would be towards the western route, but if taken out by the water it would go by the eastern route.

33. What is your idea as to connecting the Dargaville-Kaihu line with the Main Trunk?—It will be absolutely necessary in the near future.

34. Can you give us any idea as to the best course for the development of the country?—The best course would be to go from the Awakino and connect with Pokeno, which is the best part of the Mangakahia district. By connecting with the Pokeno on the western side of the Tutamoe Range you traverse good country, and connect with the line at the head of the Mangakahia. It would then be an everlasting life for the railway, and not a timber life only.

35. How would you bring the Waipoua Forest in connection with the main line?—By continuing the present line from Kaihu.

36. *Mr. Steadman.*] Where were you residing as a settler?—Behind Taita, up Tutamoe.

37. What title had you?—Freehold.

38. And the same land is in the market now at £3 per acre?—I sold three years ago.

39. In describing this route you started at Maungatapere, but I would like you to start at McCarroll's Gap and tell us if the land to Mareretu is the same class of land as that at Maungatapere?—I told you I was not conversant with the land there; but the eastern portion of Waikiekie is poor land.

40. What is the land like at Tauraroa?—Good land.

41. What is the quality of the land at Ruarangi?—It is all good land about the proposed deviation.

42. I am asking you about the eastern route: do you know the two routes?—Yes.

43. Do you know the Parish of Ruarangi? What is the quality of the soil?—I have told you about the portions I know, but I am not familiar with the names of each particular locality.

44. Do you know Maungakamea?—It is good land—clay country.

45. Is not a great portion of it volcanic?—Yes.

46. What about the Tangihuas?—Good grazing-country, also clay country.

47. Now go on to Poroti and Whatitiri?—It is good land.

48. Is it not good volcanic soil?—Yes.

49. Do you know what land has been sold at there recently?—No.

50. Would it surprise you to know that it has fetched £12 per acre?—No.

51. Taking the eastern route, what about the land on the banks of the Mangakahia Valley?—There is a stretch of good country there occupied by Mr. Rawnsley, who has a large farm at Poroti.

52. Is it good land at Kaitaia?—Yes.

53. Do you know how far Ruatangata is from the eastern line?—No.

54. What is the quality of the land there?—Fair, but not good.

55. What is the land between Ruatangata and the eastern line like?—Mixed country—good and bad. I have not been over that piece of country.

56. Do you know Manoa's place?—I do not know the individual settlers.

57. Do you know D. Finlayson's place?—No.

58. You made a statement about the freights: have you not left something out of your calculation in that matter?—No.

59. Have not you omitted the cost of carriage from the water to the settler's homestead?—Certainly not, because they would have to connect with the railway just the same.

60. If the eastern line went through Maungatapere they would not have very much carting, would they?—The settlers are not going to use the railway when it costs them twice as much as by carting.