

29. That has all been destroyed?—Yes.
30. Is there still timber that will be destroyed if no railway connection is given?—Unless a railway connection is soon got, the Waipou Forest will go. There is a likelihood of fire running through the heads of the trees.
31. What makes you say so?—Fires have crept down about two miles towards the road to the Waipou Forest.
32. How do they start?—From various causes. You cannot prevent a spark coming from a distance. Sometimes, when it is very dry, the heads will start alight, and the cause is very hard to ascertain.
33. Unless the timber is cut it will be all burned?—Yes.
34. *Mr. Steadman.*] How far from Kaikohe do you live?—Fifteen miles.
35. How much do you pay for packing?—4s. per hundredweight my neighbours paid, but in Waimatanui last winter 8s. 6d. per hundredweight was paid.
36. How far is it from Kaihu?—From twenty-one to twenty-six miles.
37. How far are those people from the Main Trunk line?—About eleven miles.
38. The question whether the line should go by the western route or the eastern route does not affect the Opouteke settlers?—They reach the line after the junction is made by either route.
39. Is your land ploughable, or covered with dead trees?—It is not ploughable. There are about half a dozen trees to the acre.
40. *Mr. Becroft.*] After being fifteen years on your land you should be able to give some facts as to the quality of the land for root and grain production when it is in a ploughable condition?—It is better land than it looks for grass-growing.
41. You have not tried root or grain growing?—We have grown small patches of oats and potatoes. They will grow, but we have not cultivated them to any extent.
42. *Mr. Evans.*] Does the weather interfere with the saving of the oats?—The weather does interfere. That is the reason why we do not grow them.
43. *Mr. Coom.*] What does it cost to stump that land?—Some of it could be stumped for £8 to £10 an acre.

WOOLSEY ALLEN examined. (No. 35.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a sawmiller, residing at Dargaville, and I have been thirty years in the district.
2. Will you make a statement to the Commission?—Where the line is supposed to cross the Mangakahia on the eastern route there was a mill built on a hill, 30 ft. to 40 ft. above high-water mark. Last year the boiler of this mill, in two floods, was covered with water, and on two other occasions the flood came up amongst the timber, but not to the boiler, which would be 5 ft. or 6 ft. higher. The valley that the railway follows after that is affected by flood-waters for a considerable distance, and if the line were built along the sides of the hills, which are fairly steep, the land would slip a lot, and make it very expensive. As the line would continue up that valley there is very little timber left. I want to compare the western route with the other routes as far as timber and royalty and work for the line are concerned. If you start at Kirikopuni, you would get timber on the railway within one mile. When you get in four or five miles you would be tapping a kauri forest belonging to the Government, with 14,000,000 or 15,000,000 feet of timber, without considering the white-pine or totara. That timber, at present, is worth about 2s. per 100 ft. in royalty. If the railway went there it would be worth anything up to 5s. per 100 ft. as it stands. About 10,000,000 ft. of the Mitchelson Timber Company's kauri have yet to come out also, and it would come by the line. If the line does not go down that valley, and goes into the Mangakahia, the rimu, kahikatea, and totara will be destroyed. Then, taking the land on the eastern and that on the western route, I say that there is absolutely no comparison between the two for quality or value.
3. *Mr. Evans.*] You prefer the western route to the eastern?—Yes. I really think the western route will be more profitable and better than the eastern.
4. *Mr. Coom.*] How wide is the Mangakahia River at this place where you say that the boiler was flooded 30 ft. or 40 ft. above high-water mark?—Not more than 30 ft. or 40 ft.
5. Are the banks high on the other side?—No; only on one side.
6. What is the height of the low side?—About 15 ft. from high-water mark.
7. Where does the water go when it goes over the bank?—It goes away up the valley. You will see the driftwood well up on the side of the hill.
8. Do you suppose it will be possible to put the railway across the river on a 30 ft. span?—No; it is 30 ft. on the bottom, but it opens out.
9. Would a 40 ft. span do?—It would require a span of 50 ft. or 60 ft.
10. You say that the banks are liable to slip: is there any evidence of that?—There are slips along the valley.
11. *Mr. Steadman.*] Is not the land in that particular place supported by sandstone?—I never saw sandstone there. On the sides of the hills you can see a great number of slips.
12. Is it not all good sandstone country?—There are a good many slips. In parts of the country the timber is not long off.
13. How far below the Titoki Bridge is this?—Three or four miles, anyway.
14. Do you mean to imply that a 60 ft. span would bring the railway across on a level?—I am not an authority, but I know that the bank is higher on the one side than on the other.
15. Do you know what the level of the mill was above the creek?—I have a fair idea of the grades, and I reckon that at the very least from high water it was 40 ft. to the level of the mill.
16. You did not take it with a level?—No.