

116. You know the Selwyn Settlement?—Yes.
 117. There are over a hundred settlers there?—Yes.
 118. Do you know if they have done comparatively well?—Yes. Several have sold out, but at a good profit.
 119. The whole settlement was settled when?—About seven years ago.
 120. When there were over a hundred settlers?—Yes.
 121. The land being similar in quality to what you have taken up?—Yes.
 122. And similar in quality to this large area [map referred to]?—Yes.
 123. The settlers have treated the land in much the same way that you have done?—Yes.
 124. And all have done well?—Yes.
 125. Do you know the character of the land lying to the south of Putaruru?—Yes.
 126. Are you able to pledge your oath that it is about the same character of land that you have taken up?—It is similar.
 127. Are you satisfied that the great bulk of that land about Putaruru is capable of profitable farming?—Absolutely certain, in small areas.
 128. But only if a railway provides access?—Yes; otherwise it is absolutely useless.
 129. There has been some settlement down the line: do you know the Smith Block?—Yes.
 130. You know there are some settlers there?—Yes.
 131. If the company gives its line up what position would they be in?—A very difficult position.
 132. Taking the southern settlement, what effect would the pulling-up of the line have upon it?—I heard one person make a statement that he would get out of it as soon as possible.
 133. *Mr. Wilson.*] It would be absolutely useless for a man without money to go on this land?—A man wants money certainly to make a quick success of it.

TUESDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1912.

SAMUEL CROWTHER sworn and examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—Coach-proprietor.
 2. *Hon. Sir J. Findlay.*] Where do you live?—Waiouru, on the Main Trunk line.
 3. You are in partnership with Mr. Macauley, coach-proprietor?—Yes.
 4. You have been driving on the road between Waiouru and Tokaanu for some years?—Yes, about five years and a half.
 5. How often?—Daily.
 6. Then I may take it that you know the country south and round about Lake Taupo?—I know all that country. I have been over the lot of it many a time.
 7. You were formerly driving from Napier to Taupo?—Yes, for twenty years.
 8. How long have you been in this Taupo district altogether?—About forty years and a half. I went there in the middle of March, 1872, and have been connected with it ever since. We have still got a small business there now. My brother is there now.
 9. In Taupo?—Yes. I have never been away from it.
 10. You have been connected with the district for over forty years?—Yes. I went there with the Armed Constabulary.
 11. As long ago as forty years was wheat being grown on lands south of Taupo?—Yes, at Tokaanu, on the flats. On the dry portions of the flats at Tokaanu wheat was grown by the Maoris, and they used to grind their own flour.
 12. What is that country like now?—It has gone back to brambles, briars, and manuka. It is good land, too.
 13. Can you say the crops grown by the Maoris were good?—Yes, very good. They grew potatoes, pumpkins, and kumeras—their usual food. They were the old Natives.
 14. Have you, alone or in partnership with others, tried cultivation on these lands?—Yes, at Taupo, Opepe, and Rangitaiki, on the Napier-Taupo Road. Rangitaiki is beyond Tarawera, and Opepe is ten miles beyond that.
 15. Whereabouts on the river?—On the western side of the river and road. It is on part of the Lochinbar Station.
 16. That is between a place called Tarawera and Taupo?—Yes, about twenty-two miles.
 17. Where else were you farming?—At Opepe, where the old military camp was.
 18. How far is that from Taupo?—Eleven miles.
 19. And the third place?—At Taupo itself. We grew oats there for two years. It has been in grass ever since and never had any manure.
 20. Is that land in the three places mentioned classed with pumice lands?—Yes, it is pumice land, and Rangitaiki was one of the most exposed places on the road. We grew very good oats. It is in grass now.
 21. Did you put much manure down?—Only what came out from the stables. It was too far to cart it from Napier on account of the bad roads.
 22. For how many years did you farm the Rangitaiki farm?—Thirteen years.
 23. And how long were you farming at Taupo?—Six or seven years, in different places.
 24. Did you farm at Opepe?—Yes, for two years on the one spot.
 25. On each of those farms you say you grew good oats?—Good oats and chaff, and grass afterwards. The grass at Taupo is still there, and any one can see it.
 26. You know the quality of the land generally through which the proposed railway passes?—Right through to Galatea. I have been over it scores of times.