

36. *The Chairman.*] Would the whole of the country referred to be brought into connection with Wellington by the proposed line of railway?—Yes.

37. Could the gradients mentioned in your report on the line from Hayward's to Pahautanui be eased by tunnelling?—Yes, without much additional expense.

38. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] To what can you reduce the gradients mentioned in your report—namely, 1 in 30 (section 2)?—No advantage would be gained by reducing the gradient in the neighbourhood of No 2 saddle. I think that the gradient might be reduced to 1 in 40 in the Wainui saddle by putting in a tunnel 20 chains in length.

39. Would that be through rock?—It is all through rock.

40. Would the works be of a heavy nature?—No, they would not.

41. Have you taken sections along the line of proposed railway?—No; merely heights of saddles by aneroid.

42. Would there be a fair supply of ballast between Paikakariki and Palmerston?—Ample.

43. Are you aware of the nature of the subsoil of the swamps?—I believe sandy, but at the surface a rich black soil for some depth.

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WEDNESDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 1877.

Mr. J. D. BAIRD examined.

44. *The Chairman.*] Your name is James Daniel Baird?—Yes.

45. You were lately Provincial Engineer for the province?—Yes.

46. As Engineer, I presume you have a general knowledge of the various districts included in the late province?—Yes.

47. Do you know the country lying between Hayward's and the Wainui?—Yes, I have a general knowledge of it. I have never been actually over it.

48. Have you any idea of the elevation of the country between Hayward's and Pahautanui?—The highest point of the saddle would be 500 feet. I gather that from Mr. Beere's report.

49. You have a survey plan of it?—I have.

50. Does the plan show the height of the saddle?—It simply gives the gradient. I have the height in the report forwarded to the Superintendent in 1874. The height of the Wainui saddle is about 1,140 feet.

51. It was given by Mr. Beere at 650 feet?—The height of the saddle between Pahautanui and Wainui is 770 feet; the other saddle is 1,140 feet high.

[At this juncture the examination of Sir William Fitzherbert was proceeded with.]

Mr. BAIRD's examination resumed.

52. *The Chairman.*] I believe you are personally acquainted with the country about Fitzherbert?—Yes.

53. You know the country well?—Yes; I had a large quantity of land there.

54. And that land was cut up for sale?—Yes.

55. And a township formed?—Yes.

56. Can you state what the land in the neighbourhood of the township realized at sale?—From £7 to £10 a quarter of an acre. The sale took place lately in Wellington.

57. Without roads of any kind?—Yes.

58. The land is practically inaccessible at the present time?—Yes.

59. What is the character of the land as regards quality?—The bush land is very good indeed. The open land where the township stands is not so good. Immediately you enter the bush the land is capital.

60. Do you know anything of the character of the forest along the line of country from Waikanae to Manawatu—the character of the timber?—From Wainui over to Horowhenua there is a great deal of fine totara.

61. Any other timbers?—Yes; there is matai, rimu, and pine. The finest totara I have seen in the North Island is about Manawatu, and in a large quantity. I did not explore to any extent, but there appeared to be a considerable supply of timber there. I have heard from the Natives that at Otaki there is much totara.

62. What is the character of the lower slopes?—I do not know.

63. Can you state whether it is birch or pine country?—I think it is pine and tawa. Birch is found higher up the range.

64. You heard Sir William Fitzherbert say there were from 150,000 to 200,000 acres of good land?—Yes; I estimate the strip near Manawatu to be about eight miles broad, and about a mile to be sandy; the rest is very good land. From the coast it appears an isolated range. The proposed route from Wainui to Otaki would go inside the first range and cross Otaki near the present village. The whole of this land is good.

65. Do you know anything of the extent of the population in that neighbourhood?—No, I do not. It is sparsely peopled.

66. Do you know the Akataura line?—No; I only know of it from the surveyors.

67. Do you know anything of the land from Hayward's to Pahautanui?—I only know of it from Mr. Beere's survey.

68. Have you been up Horokiwi Valley?—No, I have not.

69. This plan, I believe, represents the section from Blackey's to Horokiwi?—No; it is simply a traverse from Horokiwi to Wainui. The schoolhouse shown is at Horokiwi. We only commenced the survey at Horokiwi. The gradient appears to be 1 in 36 to a certain point, then 1 in 33, and