

farmer. I am a member of the Wellington District Highway Road Board and of the Hutt County Council.

116. Do you know the line of country from Hayward's to Pahautanui, and by Horokiwi to Wainui?—Well.

117. What is the class of land?—Very good. It is a rolling country, heavily timbered with excellent timber.

118. Can you state the value of the land along this line?—Supposing there were roads, if the land were put into the market, it would fetch from £2 10s. to £3 per acre. The timber on the land would pay for the land if it could be got to a market.

119. Do you know the country from Paikakariki to Fitzherbert?—Well.

120. Can you state what is the character of the land?—Chiefly excellent bush land; there is, however, some extent of good open land.

121. What is the class of timber on the land?—A good deal of totara, and plenty of matai, rimu, or red pine, and the other ordinary timber.

122. Is there much tawa bush?—There is, at the back of the Manawatu.

123. What extent of swamp is there on this line?—There is no swamp in the bush land, but outside of it, and between the bush and the coast there is some swamp land.

124. How have you become acquainted with the country?—I have been all through this line of country after cattle. I have known it for years.

125. What is the character of the country on the slopes of the Tararua Range?—Very good land, far better when cleared than the hills between this and Porirua.

126. What is the average width of good land from the foot of the range?—I should say, at a guess, from Otaki about three miles, widening thence to Foxton to fourteen miles.

127. Is there available land along the coast between the bush and the coast?—There is a strip of from three to seven miles inside of the said hills, and it is splendid land.

128. If cut up into blocks of from 50 to 500 acres, what do you think the land you speak of worth?—The general average of bush land would fetch £4 an acre—of course supposing there were roads or railway.

129. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] Would roads have to be made, or would line of railway be sufficient?—If the main line were built the settlers would themselves make roads to the line of railway.

130. Could the land you speak of be ploughed?—It could, if cleared and stumped.

131. *The Chairman.*] You know Jenkins's clearing? What is the class of land about there?—It is splendid land. It could be brought under the plough without difficulty.

132. Would the land be soon taken up if there were a line of railway in the district?—I know a great many settlers who would sell out near town at once, and buy land there if the line were made.

133. Would there be any bad rivers to cross on the line of railway?—There would be no difficulty in crossing any of the rivers on the line; the only bad crossing would be at Otaki.

FRIDAY, 12TH OCTOBER, 1877.

MR. JAMES BOOTH examined.

134. *The Chairman.*] Your name is James Booth?—Yes.

135. You are in the Native Land Purchase Department?—Yes.

136. Are you acquainted with the condition of the purchases of land on the West Coast, between Waikanae and the Manawatu?—Yes.

137. Can you state what proportion of the land between the two places mentioned has been purchased from the Natives?—I produce a tracing showing the completed purchases. One block here of 4,400 acres has been partly purchased. A reserve is to be made out of it, which will probably take a third, perhaps a fourth of this block.

138. What is the condition of the Horowhenua Block?—The Horowhenua Block of 52,000 acres belongs to another tribe, the Muaupoko. They have not yet consented to the survey being made. There has been a small advance made to one man, a chief, for his personal claim in the higher part of the block, but it amounts only to £64. I have spoken to Major Kemp, the chief of the tribe, and he says he has no objection whatever to the railway running across, but, at the same time, he would require compensation for the land taken. If a station were erected on the block, he would give ten acres. There are five blocks here called the Manawatu-Kukutauaki No. 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E, on which £970 has been paid, and preliminary deeds have been signed by several of the grantees; but within the last twelve months they have changed their minds and are determined not to sell, or they ask a very exorbitant price—for instance, £1 an acre along the ridge.

139. At present there is very little hope of completing this purchase?—Yes.

140. But the major part of the country may be said to be purchased?—Yes.

141. Do you know the country, Mr. Booth?—I have been eastward a few miles from the coast.

142. Have you a general knowledge of the character of the land?—Yes.

143. Is it good?—Very good; all bush. There is a considerable sprinkling of totara, also rimu and matai.

144. You consider the bush to be good bush land?—Generally, it is good bush land; not heavy.

145. But still good timber land?—Yes.

146. Have you any idea whether the Native owners of the five blocks, Manawatu-Kukutauaki No. 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E, would object to the construction of a line?—In their present temper I could not say. I have seen Major Kemp this morning, and he says his is all right, and the people south of those blocks, I believe, are all agreeable.

147. There is a portion of these Natives' land which intervenes between Palmerston and Waikanae?—Yes. The line would have to pass through these five blocks.