

160. So that it does not follow that because it is bush land it is useless for cultivation?—No at all.

161. What is the climate in that direction—in the country you are alluding to: is it wet or dry, or do you consider it a more moderate climate than Wellington?—I should think it is a good climate; not very wet; and I should think also it is warmer than here. At Murimotu, however, I have seen snow on the 1st May, but it did not lie long.

162. Mr. Gill has promised to give us a map showing the Native lands, and the extent. You have no objection to certify to that map, I suppose, so that we would have, with Mr. Blackett's, a double certificate?—I shall be quite prepared to do so.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. J. W. A. MARCHANT to the Hon. E. RICHARDSON.

New Zealand Survey Department, 24th September, 1884.

WHEN called upon at an hour's notice to give evidence upon the central route, I was only in a position to speak generally as to the character of the country, &c.; since then, I have considered the whole subject, and have to submit, for the information of the Committee, the particulars they requested me to furnish.

1. The area in the Wellington Provincial District which would be benefited by the central route I estimate at 2,000,000 acres.

2. I assume that the following would be the important tributaries or feeders to the railway at the points named:—

Hunterville.—A line westward to the Turakina, and thence northwards through the Turakina and Mangapapa Valleys.

Pokiori.—A line, *via* Murray's horse-road, through the northern Otairi, to the Mangaone Valley.

Kiekie-Otara.—A line to the eastward to open Otamakapua, Mangoira, and the Upper Oroua District.

Hautapu Junction.—A line, *via* the Rangitikei and Moawhango, to connect with Owhaoko and other blocks.

Ngaurukehu.—A line to the south-westward to open up the the Upper Mangaone and Mangapapa Valleys.

Turangarere and Tuhirangi.—Lines to the eastward and northward to open up Birch's and Moorhouse's runs and the Taupo country.

3. The other main lines in the country known to me would be southward and westward, to connect the Upper Mangapapa, Turakina, Wangaehu, Mangawhero, and Wanganui Valleys.

4. If it be admitted that roads can be taken through these various routes, it is manifest that a central railway would serve a large area of the northern Wellington Provincial District.

5. The information contained in the attached Schedule A is based upon a general knowledge of the country and surveyors' reports, and gives, as far as my judgment and recollection serve me, a fair description of the lands. I have to state that I have experienced some difficulty in preparing the return, inasmuch as several years have elapsed since I visited some of the localities.

6. The summary of the lands on Schedule A shows that the tenure for the first 86 miles is as follows:—

	Acre.
Crown lands	133,800
Lands alienated to Europeans	83,947
Native lands leased to the Crown or Europeans	444,297
Native lands	298,237
Total	<u>960,281</u>

7. The character and quality of these lands are such, in my opinion, that if they were opened up by railway and roads, and offered on liberal terms, on the free-selection system, subject to settlement and improvement conditions, they would be taken up and occupied by European settlers.

8. Appended will be found copies of reports from staff and other surveyors, relating to the nature of the lands in several of the blocks. These reports are by,—

- (1.) Mr. District-Surveyor Dundas, upon the Rangatira, Otamakapua, Hautapu, and Moawhango Districts;
- (2.) Mr. District-Surveyor D. H. Monro, upon the Kirikau Block;
- (3.) Mr. Assistant-Surveyor John Annabell, upon the country generally;
- (4.) Mr. Assistant-Surveyor H. C. Field, upon Otairi Block;
- (5.) Messrs. Palmerson and Scott, upon the same block.

J. W. A. MARCHANT,
Chief Surveyor and Commissioner of Crown Lands.