

noticed; but the country right through is flat for, I think, seventeen miles, although the railway line does not go quite so far along it, but rises on to a table-land. Then take the fourth section. I think the description in my report is tolerably fair. Of course there is some pumice in that country.

330. Did you notice in your explorations any indications of minerals?—I did not.

331. Any coal?—I have seen coal there. I brought a number of specimens back with me.

332. From what part of the country?—Near Te Kuiti. I brought specimens from close to Tauwaranui.

333. Would that coal which you speak of, near Te Kuiti, be at the head-waters of the Mokau?—No; at the head-waters of the Waipa; and the other is on the Wanganui River.

334. Is it good coal?—It is brown coal.

335. All of it?—Yes. I have a number of specimens in these buildings now.

336. It is all brown coal?—Yes; I tried every specimen.

337. *Mr. Fergus.*] You said yesterday that most of this line would be somewhat similar to the Canterbury Plains?—Yes.

338. Are you aware of the cost of constructing a line through the Canterbury Plains?—I know that the average cost was about £6,000.

339. This is £6,093. Is that a small cost for the construction of a line through favourable country?—I consider it is an average price. For a great deal of the country it will be very much less. Lots of it would not come up to that amount by £2,000 per mile.

340. Then, the heaviest portion of the country would be considerably more?—Yes; but I think the light part is very considerably in excess of the heavy part—in fact, I know it is.

341. And the cost of the line over the Canterbury Plains was considerably more?—Yes; but on that line the bridging is remarkably heavy.

342. You know the land pretty well through the Canterbury Plains, and also from Oamaru down to Dunedin?—No; I do not know the latter line.

343. You know that through the Canterbury Plains, then?—Yes, all of it.

344. Do you consider that the land on the Marton line would average that on the Canterbury Plains from Christchurch down to Timaru?—I should say it was better, except in regard to the Timaru end.

345. You think there is better land along the Marton line than there is on the Canterbury Plains, on an average?—Decidedly.

346. What would you give as the extent of good land from Christchurch to Timaru? Is there as great an extent of good land on the Marton line as on that line?—I should say there is quite as much good land. I should say there is even more. There is a large extent of country.

347. I mean per mile?—Yes, quite as much; only this is bush, and on the Canterbury line it is open.

348. *Mr. Montgomery.*] You have gone over each side of the Marton line some miles, in the course of your explorations?—Yes, a great many miles—twenty, I should say.

349. Over all the line, from end to end?—Well, through the greatest part of it.

350. *The Chairman.*] As much as twenty miles?—Yes; but there are parts where I have not been that distance.

351. *Mr. Montgomery.*] Have you gone more than four miles?—Yes, considerably more than that. I have gone right through to the Wanganui River: that is about twenty miles.

352. Did you go backward and forward in order to get the best line, thus enabling you to see a good deal of the land?—Yes.

353. What do you mean by agricultural land?—I mean land that would be fit for growing crops.

354. Land that is now covered with bush do you call agricultural land?—Decidedly, provided it was of sufficiently good quality.

355. It would require the bush to be cut down?—Yes; but at one end of the line there is a great quantity of open land.

356. The bush would require to be cut down before the land could be used?—Decidedly.

357. And then it could be ploughed?—Yes.

358. Would it not require to be stumped?—Of course; the usual process of bush-felling.

359. It would simply be grass land until it was stumped? It could not be ploughed till it was stumped?—No; I should think not. I never saw any ground yet that was ploughed till it was stumped.

*Mr. Fergus:* I have seen some thousand acres.

360. *Mr. Montgomery.*] This is thickly-timbered land?—Yes.

361. It is not so thickly timbered as generally about Woodville?—I think it is. I think the trees were much larger.

362. And as close together?—Yes, I think so.

363. What is the open land south of the Murimotu Plains, compared to the Murimotu Plain land? Do you consider the land on the Murimotu Plains fit for cultivation?—No.

364. And the other land you speak of is much better than that?—Considerably better. There is a line very distinctly marked where the good land ends and the pumice country begins.

365. The Murimotu Plains is pumice country?—Yes.

366. *Mr. Fulton.*] Do you recommend any further exploration of the Feilding route?—No; not to connect with this line.

367. Is there plenty of ballast to be got all along the Marton line?—It can be got in places sufficiently near to make it all along the line.