

SUMMARY.

Marton to Hautapu	£229,910
Turangarere to Hautapu	151,230
Turangarere to Waimarino	246,350
Te Awamutu to Waimarino	580,844
Add road	1,208,334
	84,800
Total	
	£1,293,134
Amount per mile	5,693
Cost of road alongside	400
Total cost per mile (including permanent-way, stations, and rolling-stock)	£6,093

MEMORANDUM.—Earthwork was taken at 1s. 6d. per yard all through, without reckoning lead; 6d. per yard more would increase cost £316 per mile.

Mr. H. M. SKEET, surveyor, examined.

394. *The Chairman.*] You are in the Government service?—Yes.

395. In the Survey Department?—Yes.

396. Where have you been mostly engaged?—All through Taranaki.

397. Have you been engaged on the survey of either of the proposed lines of railway for the North Island?—No.

398. Your knowledge of the country, then, is from surveys undertaken for the Survey Department?—Yes.

399. Point out to the Committee, on the map, what part of the country you have traversed?—The country I am able to speak about is from Patea, in a line northward, to the head of the Mokau River, and also down the Wanganui to the sea, from the junction of the Ohara.

400. Have you been north of the Mokau?—Yes; I have been fifteen miles north of the Mokau River, and inland about four miles.

401. How far to the east of the western line have you been?—About five miles in one place to the eastward of the northern part.

402. Will you tell the Committee the general features of that country: is it broken?—It is hilly, but you can hardly call it broken, because the hills are not so very high; but it is rather rough in places.

403. Is it country that you consider fit for settlement?—In some places it is not.

404. What proportion of it would you consider fit for settlement, say within the five miles that you travelled, and ten miles to the westward?—That part of the five miles is good for settlement; it is lower down where it is unfit. From Ohura up to the Mokau the country eastward is fit for settlement, with the exception of small patches where it is black birch; but the other way there are places where it is unfit except for the timber.

405. Why?—Because the black-birch country is most unsuitable for farming or agricultural purposes.

406. Because the land is poor or broken?—Because the soil is poor.

407. What do you know about the lower part of the line, coming down from Ohura to Stratford?—The part in the middle is rough, with patches of black birch. That is in the vicinity of Tangarakau. Coming towards Stratford it gets better. From Stratford to a stream called Makahu the country is good, in certain parts rough.

408. Do you know anything about the actual levels of that country?—With the exception of the tops of the hills.

409. Have you taken any heights yourself?—Yes; I have taken the heights of the hills from trig. stations, and I generally carried an aneroid barometer, and took the heights as I went along.

410. Is any of that country very high?—The highest runs from 800ft. above the sea-level to 1,800ft.; that is, about the waters of the Tangarakau.

411. *Mr. Montgomery.*] What is the nature of the land twenty miles north from Stratford from a settlement point of view?—Good.

412. On both sides?—Yes, for certain distances.

413. What distance?—There are some places on the Waitara River, for instance, where it is rough.

414. What is the nature of the country twenty miles north of that again?—That is where the rough part is.

415. It is not fit for settlement, you think?—In places it is fit.

416. And with regard to the next twenty miles?—The first part of that is rough. It is the valley of the Tangarakau.

417. How much is fit for settlement?—About half.

418. And the next twenty miles?—It is fit for settlement, and certainly for a considerable distance on both sides of the line.

419. And the next twenty miles?—That is good. It brings you into the Mokau country. Westward there is some rough country in the upper part.