

420. That makes one hundred miles?—Yes.
421. From that point up to the junction, what is the nature of the country?—I do not know it.
422. When you say it is fit for settlement, do you mean it is agricultural land?—Well, in places. I mean that some is fit for runs and some for farming purposes.
423. What do you understand by agricultural land?—Land fit for the plough, principally.
424. Do you mean fit for the plough now?—No.
425. After being cleared of bush?—Yes.
426. After being stumped?—No; after the bush is down; level land that you could plough and could be farmed. The hilly country would do for sheep-runs; that I would call pastoral.
427. Has that bush upon it too?—Not in all places.
428. Some of it is open?—Yes.
429. What is on it now?—Fern and native grass.
430. Is the bush heavy along the line, generally speaking?—In places.
431. What is the nature of the bush?—The heavy parts are rimu, rata, matai, kahikatea, and pukatea; totara in places, but not a great quantity of totara.
432. Would there be much expense incurred in clearing it for agriculture?—Not above the usual expense. The heavy bush would be expensive, but not the lighter bush.
433. What is the usual charge for clearing such land as you would call light-bush land, and laying it down in grass?—It was from £1 to £2 5s.
434. Is that for laying down grass also?—Not the grass: that is an extra consideration. That price is for clearing.
435. And for the heavy bush land?—£2 upwards to fall the bush and burn it, and clear it; not including grass.
436. *The Chairman.*] Leaving the stumps in?—They do not take the stumps out.
437. *Mr. Montgomery.*] Does your price refer to the first burning or the second?—The first.
438. It does not include the collecting together of the logs?—No.
439. *Mr. Fulton.*] In your report of the 30th July you speak of an extensive coal field?—Yes.
440. Have you had specimens of the coal analysed?—I have not.
441. Can you give the Committee an idea of the quality of the coal?—It is similar to the Mokau coal. I think there are specimens of that in the Museum.
442. Is it brown coal or true coal?—Dr. Hochstetter says it is brown coal.
443. Specimens have been brought down to Wellington?—From Mokau. It is an extensive country—about thirty by twenty miles.
444. *Mr. Larnach.*] Are the patches of black birch, to which you have alluded, large?—No; they run generally northwards and south-east.
445. What is the average size of the patches?—In some places they are two or three miles across.
446. Are they numerous?—In places they are.
447. Is the timber marketable?—Yes.
448. You know the term “rolling downs,” I suppose.—Yes.
449. Are the hills you have described what would come under the definition of rolling downs?—No.
450. Are they ploughable?—The higher parts are not.
451. Are any of them of limestone formation?—Some. There is limestone in the formation, towards Mokau principally.
452. Altogether, you have been up the Stratford line about a hundred miles?—Yes, all through the country; not right along the line, but all round it.
453. In proximity to it?—Yes.
454. What do you think of the land altogether?—I could hardly say. Taking it altogether, it would be hilly and forest land.
455. Of the average quality?—Well, the first part is good, the middle is bad, and the other end is good again.
456. I gathered that the bulk of it was good?—Yes, —
457. Who are chiefly the owners of the land along the line? Is it chiefly held by Natives or by the Crown, or is it in the hands of private individuals?—I should say by Natives and by private individuals the greater bulk of it.
458. Does the line run more through the lands of the Natives or those of private individuals?—More through the land of the Natives.
459. Very much more?—Yes. [Witness here explained, by means of a large map, which was Native land, Crown land, and land in the hands of the hands of private individuals, &c.]
460. *Mr. W. White.*] The Crown land is confiscated land, I suppose?—Not all. The western part of it is.
461. *The Chairman.*] You have not visited the country along the central line?—I have only seen it from trig. stations from a considerable distance.
462. *Mr. Larnach.*] How many years have you been in the district you have been describing?—The first time I went there was in 1876.
463. *The Chairman.*] And you have been in that district ever since?—Yes; and through it at different times.

Mr. MORGAN CARKEEK, authorized surveyor, examined.

464. *The Chairman.*] You are not in the employ of the Government?—No.

465. You are aware, I suppose, that this Committee has been appointed by the House to make a recommendation as to the best route for the North Island Railway?—Yes.