

597. Timbered?—There is some timber on it. It is good timber—rimu.

598. From that distance up to Ruapehu, what is the quality?—It is all good land up to the south of Ruapehu.

599. Timbered land?—Yes.

600. For how many miles on each side of the line did you examine it?—Sometimes we could see fifteen or twenty miles, and sometimes only a few hundred yards.

601. When you describe the land on each side, do you mean that you travelled over it, or saw it from the heights?—I described it from what we went over and what we saw from the look-out.

602. And you think it is good land?—Yes.

603. It is timbered?—It is something like the land about Woodville, which I know you are acquainted with.

604. Is it so heavy as between Masterton and Woodville?—No; there is not so much large timber on it.

605. What is the nature of the country?—It is undulating country, with river flats.

606. Is it as fit for settlement as between Masterton and Woodville?—Quite.

607. That is, from Marton right up to Ruapehu?—Up to about ten or fifteen miles south of Ruapehu.

608. What would be the total distance from Marton to that point?—It would be about eighty miles from Marton on Mr. Rochfort's first map.

609. And then it becomes inferior country?—From there I have not been over the exact line because it went through swamps and bush. I have only seen it from a height, and therefore do not know it. At Waimarino it is very poor pumice land—that is, to the northwards of Ruapehu; and then it is very poor land again at Waimeha. Then, as soon as you get on to the other side of the watershed of the Mokau, it is good again.

FRIDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. KNORPP, Inspecting Engineer, further examined.

610. *Mr. Fulton.*] You have gone through calculations as to this line, have you not?—As to estimates?

611. Yes?—I have gone through with Mr. Rochfort's aneroid survey, and went over the line and made an approximate estimate.

612. And that approximate estimate is near Mr. Rochfort's?—I do not know what his is.

613. What do you estimate that the line will cost per mile?—Well, I think it comes up to just about £6,000 per mile, but that would not include the cost of the land, because it is difficult to know what the price of the land will be.

614. Have you any idea of what is the average price for the purchase of land where the line goes through private lands?—That varies very much according to the district. I have got a *résumé* of railways that have been made, but I could not tell you from memory.

615. Do you consider, then, that £6,000 per mile indicates a line which is easy of construction;—Easy of construction generally, but with some difficult points.

616. What is about the average cost of construction of railway per mile?—The average cost of construction up to 1881 was about £7,500 for the North Island, and £6,500 for the South Island? that was, including all charges.

617. Including the purchase of land?—Yes, as far as purchased up to that date.

618. Then, you would not call this an exceptionally-favourable line as compared with the South Island railways, if it is to cost £6,000 per mile without the purchase of land?—I think it would be considered an expensive line for the South Island, but for the North Island it would be considered a cheap line.

619. *Mr. Larnach.*] You spoke yesterday of the rate of speed that you thought a train could travel on it if the central line were constructed: that it would be a similar rate of speed to that reached on the existing lines?—Yes.

620. But, judging from the levels, and presuming the line to be well made, could a train run at the same speed as on the Great Western in England?—I would not undertake to say that.

621. You have travelled over the Great Western?—No.

622. Have you travelled over the line to Edinburgh?—No; I have never been to Scotland. The gauges have something to do with the speed. The gauge in this country is 3ft. 6in., and in that country it is either 4ft. 8½in. or 5ft. 2in.

623. You mentioned that there was a good deal of limestone land on this route?—Yes.

624. Have you any idea of the extent?—I have no idea of the quantity, but I can show on the map the distances to where the limestone extends along the line.

625. You have no rough estimate?—No; I could not give estimates, but I could show it on the map. Up to the Mokauiti, from the Auckland end, is limestone, and then on the Ongarue.

626. Does it extend on both sides of the line?—Yes.

627. Did you accompany Mr. Mitchelson on his journey?—I did.

628. Which route was that?—We went through from Marton to Te Awamutu, and then again from Te Awamutu inwards along the Stratford route up to certain distances, and then went down the Mokau on the coast-line.

629. How long were you with Mr. Mitchelson in going through?—We were about a month altogether.

630. That was on both lines?—Yes.

631. And what conclusion did you come to in your own mind as to which was the more advisable route?—I do not know. Am I bound to answer that question?