

794. Where do you get your ballast from for that?—That has to be found. have not seen any.
795. What have you reckoned it at?—Just at the usual rate.
796. What is that?—It varies from 2s. to 4s. I have not gone into detailed prices at all in my estimate.
797. *The Chairman.*] Have you taken out the quantities?—No.
798. Then, the basis of this estimate is this: that you have formed your opinion on the line as you have gone along it, as to whether it is easy, moderate, heavy, very heavy, or tunnel?—Yes.
799. And you have put an average price per mile for the work—for the easy, moderate, heavy, very heavy, and so forth?—Yes.
800. Without going into details at all?—Yes.
801. Do you know of any other estimate being made of that line?—No, I do not.
802. You have estimated the cost of the formation of “easy” construction at £2,500?—Yes.
803. And for the “moderate” £4,000?—Yes.
804. The “heavy” at £5,000, and the “very heavy” at £7,000 per mile?—Yes.
805. And the tunnels at £900 per chain?—Yes.
806. *Mr. W. White.*] Have you any estimate of the number of yards in the “easy”?—No.
807. How do you arrive at the amount per chain or per mile of what is called “easy”?—By comparing it with work that I do know the price of.
808. Where was the work that you allude to?—In the Taranaki District principally.
809. Then, you have no estimate whatever of the number of yards?—No.
810. Could you not have taken the ballast and left that out, and estimated rather than take the formation? I mean, would it not have been a more accurate estimate if you had reckoned the number of yards per chain required, and put a price upon that?—I could not do so. I had no information. The ballast is not included in the formation.
811. But in this estimate of yours the ballast has been reckoned at 2s. or 3s. per yard?—No. it is not in that estimate at all.
812. It is included in the permanent-way. How much has been reckoned for that?—I reckoned £3,000 per mile to cover the permanent-way, stations, and rolling-stock.
813. *Mr. Gore.*] Is there much good land along the route in comparison to the quantity of bad land?—I reckon from the 90th mile to the 123rd is all good for a width of nearly ten miles.
814. And what does the other portion consist of?—From 85 to 90 would be no good; and from 60 to 80 about two-thirds of it would be good agricultural ploughable land. From 50 to 60 I do not think that it is good for anything, either for agriculture or grazing.
815. *Mr. Fergus.*] How long were you up there altogether, occupied in exploring the land and taking a survey?—Nearly three months.
816. You were employed chiefly between miles 50 and 123?—Yes.
817. Your evidence is practically this: From 50 up to 90 there is very little land of much good at all, from 50 to 60 the width of the gorge is about ten chains, and from 60 to 80 it varies to about a mile and a half, and from 80 to 85 the valley narrows, and from 85 to 90 there is not much land at all?—Yes.
818. In other words, from 50 to 90 there is very little good land at all?—It is very good land at the bottom of the vallies, what there is of it.
819. What acreage do you consider there would be from the 50th to the 90th mile of land that was good either for agriculture or grazing, or for any other similar purpose—in fact, fit for settlement of any description?—I consider that from 60 to 80 there would be three miles wide of such land, taking it right across country.
820. And from 80 to 90 there is nothing?—It would be very narrow; only a few thousand acres altogether.
821. You know the land round about Parihaka and Patea?—Yes.
822. Is there any of the land from 60 to 80 to be compared with the land there?—There is not the same extent.
823. I mean in quality?—Yes. I think the land at the bottom of the valley of the Mangaroa and part of the Eao are equal to it.
824. Are they of any extent?—The valley would not be more than a mile wide. You could plough a mile wide. The rivers are very much like the Whenuakura in character.
825. There is plenty of timber for bridging purposes all along?—Only black birch.
826. Then, you would find some difficulty in getting timber to the bridges?—Yes, unless you used black birch.
827. Did you not make any search for ballast when you were up there?—We just looked along the rivers.
828. That is the most probable place you would see it. Did you not?—We saw a little gravel in the valley of the Mangaroa; it was water-worn shingle.
829. Any quantity of it?—Very little of it. There is a little hard cemented gravel in the Tangarakau.
830. Plenty of sand?—There is a little sand in the Mangaroa.
831. From Stratford outward for fifteen miles you know the country?—Yes.
832. Have you any idea of what the character of the country is from 15 to 50 miles? You must have come in contact with many surveyors?—It is narrow valleys, with high hills on each side.
833. Very high hills?—Varying in height from 300 to 1,000ft.
834. And what would the timber be?—Rimu, matai, white pine, and tawa.
835. Not birch hills?—Only on the tops of the very highest hills.
836. Are many of those hills suitable for settlement?—A good many people think that all up along the Mangaotuku Valley is fit for settlement.