

1106. And is the land that you have described as agricultural and pastoral covered with bush now?—No; the greater part of it is open.

1107. What is the nature of the country from the 25th mile southward?—It then becomes a little more broken, and would be more suited to pastoral purposes; but there would be a large proportion of it agricultural too.

1108. For how far?—[After looking over map No. 1] This map is very incorrect. What is here marked as the 25th mile is nearer 30. I have a more correct map in my pocket.

1109. You had better produce it, then.—[Tracing produced.] This is partly compiled from official surveys and partly from Dr. Hochstetter's map; but from Taupo to Te Awamutu it is compiled from my own observations, and I think is more correct than the maps before you. My map, however, does not show the course of the railway-line except in a very rough way—not sufficiently near to enable the mileage to be scaled on it.

1110. What we wish to get from you is a general description of this country, as you have had opportunities of observing it. For twenty-five miles south of Te Awamutu you say the country is very good—fit for settlement?—Yes; it is.

1111. And a large proportion of it is agricultural?—A very large proportion.

1112. And what you call agricultural is open country and not covered with bush?—Yes.

1113. Then, what distance did you come down the central line from 25 miles?—From Te Kuiti to the Ongarue River—to the 160th mile from Marton—it is very broken country.

1114. What is the geological formation?—It is an old volcanic formation.

1115. And is much of that fit for agricultural purposes?—Very little indeed. There might occasionally be got a small homestead in the valleys and on the table-lands.

1116. And the rest of it?—The rest of it is land that possibly might be suitable for pastoral purposes in the future, but I am afraid there is so very little organic matter in the soil now that the burning off would almost destroy it.

1117. And farther down?—The valley of the Ongarue, I believe, is useless. It is a poor pumice country.

1118. And that would be from mile 160 to 150—ten miles?—Yes.

1119. And does that poor land extend to the east and west of the route as marked here on the map?—Yes; to both east and west.

1120. For any distance?—To the westward it is about three or four miles of the bush, when the soil is a little bit better, but greatly broken.

1121. And to the eastward?—There are about eight or ten miles of pumice country to the eastward.

1122. Now, coming south from that?—Coming south from that to Tamaranui—I think the distance would be about fifteen miles—the land is also broken.

1123. That is, say from mile 150 to 140?—The land is very broken. On the slopes of the hills it is a little richer, but the valleys are poor.

1124. And is any of that fit for agriculture?—I do not think so. Perhaps you might find a small patch of alluvial deposit along the banks of the river of 10 or 15 acres; but, as a general rule, it is only pastoral land.

1125. How much farther south do you know?—I know to about mile 100.

1126. What is the nature of the country from mile 140 to 100?—It is bush country, most of it.

1127. Is it broken or fit for settlement?—No; I do not think there is any agricultural land on it at all. It is broken bush country.

1128. Is it the same to the east and west of the line?—Yes, I think it is.

1129. Did you come across any minerals on that route?—I have seen coal. There is a coal deposit near Tamaranui. I also saw some small coal deposits in the beds of the rivers.

1130. Did you come across any gold?—I have seen quartz, and the Natives told me they were confident there was gold in the neighbourhood about twenty miles to the eastward of Tamaranui.

1131. What do you know about the Stratford line?—I do not know the country below Totoro personally, but I have seen it from the hill-tops. It seems to be very broken country.

1132. Do you know any of the country between Te Kuiti and Mokau?—I have been along the river to its mouth, but I do not know the country that the line traverses.

1133. You have only been on the river itself?—Only on the river itself.

1134. *Mr. W. White.*] Is there any pumice from mile 100 to 140 on the central line?—Yes, there is.

1135. Much?—Not so much as in the Ongarue Valley.

1136. That is from mile 150 to 160?—Yes.

1137. It is not all pumice?—Not all.

1138. Half of it?—You can find it any where along the line, but it is in very small quantities in places, and in those particular places it seems to be more under the surface.

1139. Not very deep?—Not very deep in that portion of the country.

1140. What is the kind of bush?—Mixed bush: toara, tawa, and rimu, and so on.

1141. Is it very good?—There is some good totara timber.

1142. *Mr. Fergus.*] Have you been in various parts of New Zealand surveying lines, as well as this particular one?—Yes; I have been all over the country.

1143. North and South?—Yes.

1144. For how long?—For the last fifteen years.

1145. How long were you in this particular portion of the country?—For twelve months.

1146. Had you and Mr. Rochfort most to do with that particular portion of the line?—I was not on the survey of the railway. I am engaged in the trigonometrical survey of the country for Government. I have surveyed railways in the north and in the south of New Zealand.

1147. Have you been twelve months over this particular part of the country?—I have been in the King country exploring for twelve months.