

1329 What are the heights of those hills?—From 200ft. to 400ft. high; the tops covered with light bush.

1330. And what was growing on those hills?—Light bush.

1331. How far did you go from each side of the line between 60 and 90 miles. I have been through and through that country; I have been over what is called Murray's track over the Otairi, along Hale's track between Wangaehu and Turakina, and along Field's track.

1332. *The Chairman.*] Will you say at what spot on the map those tracks are?—I have been all through the country between the Wangaehu and Turakina Rivers, between the 20th and 80th mile along the railway route, and also between that and the sea-coast.

1333. *Mr. Montgomery.*] Just going along the track I suppose it was where you made your observations: you did not get off the track?—In places I have been off the track.

1334. How far?—On the Wanganui line. I was surveying a block there some years ago.

1335. I ask the question because I want to know what was the extent of your observations: was it your object also to notice the quality of the soil?—We were travelling through the country at the time, and acquired a fair knowledge of the nature of the country by travelling along the tracks I have mentioned and going in at various points.

1336. You said there was some 30 or 40 per cent. of good land: do I understand you to mean that it is fit for agriculture for five miles along the line between 60 and 90 miles?—I think that statement had better not apply to the far end of the line.

1337. You said, I believe, that between 72 and 90 miles the soil became light?—Yes.

1338. How far on each side?—On the inland side for several miles, and on the seaward side to the edge of the bush.

1339. Do you mean east, or what?—South-west of the line.

1340. This description of the land, then, applies to the south-west of the line?—That description would apply to land more than five miles south-west of the line. Of course, in places there is a bit of black- or red-birch country; in other parts, again, the red birch does not appear at all; but probably it would average that amount.

1341. Are those hills fit to be ploughed?—No; only in places. Of course, some of the hills are rather steep-sided and have narrow tops.

1342. Then, where is the agricultural land if the valleys are 40 chains wide?—I am informed that—

1343. But from your own observations?—From my own observations of the Hautapu Valley there is a fair amount of level land there, from what I could see from the surrounding hills.

1344. With regard to the geological formation, is there any pumice?—Between 72 miles and 90 miles it is volcanic sand.

1345. Is it pumice?—In the river beds; yes.

1346. *Mr. Larnach.*] Have you been in any other part of New Zealand in connection with your profession?—Only on the west coast of this Island, between Rangitikei and New Plymouth.

1347. You have not been in the South Island?—No.

1348. I presume it is part of a surveyor's duty, in following his surveys, to judge of the land too, is it not?—We have to report on the quality of the land as well.

1349. You spoke of the country, I think, on the eastward of the line, which you say is of a volcanic nature?—Yes; between 72 and 90 miles.

1350. I understand you to say that all the volcanic country is on the eastward?—There is a very small amount on the westward.

1351. There is a little on the westward?—Yes; between the proposed line and the edge of the bush.

1352. But all on the eastward is volcanic?—Not all.

1353. But the chief portion of the volcanic country is on the east of the line?—Yes; up to what they call the desert.

1354. What is the distance between the bush and the line?—In places it is only a few chains.

1355. Do you know of any blocks of land which have been recently acquired from the Natives?—Yes; the Otamakapua.

1356. What is the size of that?—One hundred and forty thousand acres.

1357. By whom was it acquired?—By the Government.

1358. And what others: I want also to know what have been acquired by private individuals, if any?—There is the Rangatira Block, near Marton, acquired by Bennett, Hammond, and Dick.

1359. What is the size of that?—The size of the block is about nineteen thousand three hundred acres, but they only acquired twelve thousand acres.

1360. Do you know of any others?—A portion of the Otairi Block, three thousand acres odd, by Dalziel.

1361. Any others?—Other parts of the Otairi Block, by John Duncan, fourteen or fifteen thousand acres.

1362. Any others?—Otairi Block (No. 1), by Watt, and others, 9,000 acres.

1363. Any others?—I think those are all that have been acquired recently.

1364. Could you say, of your own knowledge, if any negotiations are now pending in respect to other lands with the Natives?—I have no knowledge of any.

1365. I should like you to be particular in giving your answer to this question. From your own knowledge of the country, is it of that nature that it would be likely to insure early settlement if facilities existed?—I am quite satisfied it is.

1366. You are perfectly satisfied of that?—Perfectly satisfied.