

1702. Do you know it from Cambridge to Taupo?—I know it from Cambridge to the crossing at the Waikato.

1703. What sort of country is that?—It is open country, but of a poor nature.

1704. Pumice?—A great deal of pumice.

1705. Do you know anything more about that route?—No. The only other part I have been on is on the north-eastern side of Lake Taupo.

1706. Now, coming to the central line, what length of that have you travelled over?—I am acquainted with the Marton line from Te Awamutu to where it parts from the Stratford line—as far as Te Kuiti.

1707. You have traversed that line right and left there?—Yes; I know that country well.

1708. What is the nature of that country?—It is principally open—fern; and it is all fit for settlement.

1709. From your knowledge of that country, do you think it matters at all where the line goes for the purpose of opening it up—would a few miles one way or the other make any difference?—It would be objectionable to throw the line much to the west, because it would run into the broken country; but anywhere in what you might term the Waipa Valley, within a mile or two, would make no difference.

1710. Leaving the junction, and coming down on the central line, how much of the country do you know?—I do not know any of that, not along the line, therefore I could not give you any information about that which would be worth having. My knowledge of the country is a general knowledge through having crossed it many years ago.

1711. Take the next twenty miles south of the junction: would either of these two lines open up the country as well as the other?—I think so; I think there is no difference between them in regard to that part.

1712. Do you know anything of the southern part of the line?—I have never been there since the line has been surveyed. My knowledge was gained a long while ago, and I can see that this line follows somewhat the line of country that I walked over.

1713. At the time you walked over, was there much land in cultivation by the Maoris?—No; very little. There was no Maori cultivation on the track from leaving Rotoaira.

1714. Then, you can only just give a general idea of that country I suppose?—That is all.

1715. And what would you describe it as?—I should say there are about thirty or forty miles of very good land from Marton.

1716. Is that all bush, or with openings?—It is about equally divided, as far as my recollection goes; all open towards Marton.

1717. And good land?—Very good land I think, and the bush at the back is very good for another ten or fifteen miles.

1718. Do you know the native timber?—Yes.

1719. Did you see much of that?—I do not remember having seen much of that.

1720. And that is practically all the information you can give on that route?—Yes; all the information that would be worth having.

1721. Then, in regard to the Stratford route, how far down from the junction do you know the country?—I know that country from the junction down to about the spot where the 90th mile is marked on the map (No. 1.)—ninety miles from Stratford. That is all good land.

1722. That is practically where the line leaves the Mokau, is it not?—Yes.

1723. You have described it as all good country down to the junction: what is your opinion about the country between the junction and where you left it?—I call it good country; but it is of a different nature to that farther north on the line.

1724. Is it broken?—It is more broken than the Waipa, but the soil is very much better.

1725. What formation is it?—Limestone.

1726. What proportion of that do you consider is fit for agriculture?—For agriculture—not with big reaping machines—about 80 per cent. of it.

1727. And the rest?—The rest would be swamps and cliffs, and places too steep for ploughing.

1728. Does that description hold good for the whole strip right across between the two lines?—Yes.

1729. If that is the case, in your opinion, supposing it is a question of these two routes, will either of these lines, as far as you know the country, open it up as well as the other?—Certainly.

1730. Do you know anything more of the country, from your own personal observation, in regard to the Stratford route, ninety miles from Stratford?—No; I only know a short length at the Stratford end. I have not been between the 90th mile and about four or five miles from the Stratford end. I may mention that I went inland from the coast to a point on the line about sixty miles from Stratford, across from the mouth of the Tongaparatu.

1731. What is the nature of the country round about there?—That is very broken. I would not like you, of course, to fix me positively to the sixty miles from Stratford; it was about there.

1732. But round about where you struck the proposed route?—Yes; that is very broken country. It is the Tangarakau country, about which the Committee has no doubt heard a great deal.

1733. What proportion of that would be fit for agriculture?—Not more than 10 per cent.

1734. And what is the balance of it?—The balance comprises steep woody ridges, which when cleared would perhaps carry sheep, and many of the ravines would grow fruit, and so forth; but New Zealand at the present day would not benefit by opening that part of the country.

1735. Taking the average width of ravines, what would be a fair width at the bottom?—From almost nothing up to three-quarters of a mile, or perhaps a mile in some places; the larger the streams the larger the flats.

1736. What is the timber, mostly, on the ridges?—On the highest ridges there are birch, rimu,