

1771. Then, you do not know anything of the country from the Mokau down to Stratford except a little bit in the middle which you crossed to from the coast?—Exactly.

1772. Do you think it would pay to establish saw-mills anywhere along this proposed line of railway for the timber?—No; I do not think it would. I should not like to venture to put any capital into such an undertaking.

1773. Why would it not pay?—The timber is too sparse; it is not dense enough. There are plenty of trees there, it is true; but there is a very small percentage that would be useful for sawing. You could not compete with places where there are good bushes.

1774. What is the principal kind of timber?—Tawa, which is not used for sawing.

1775. There is no great quantity, I suppose, of either black pine or totara?—No.

1776. And you saw no maire?—I saw a lot of maire.

1777. Is it in any quantity here?—Yes, there is a very considerable quantity on the rough country.

1778. Scattered?—Not very much scattered. It is scattered, however, in the sense that it is in patches. In one valley I walked through two or three miles of bush, the trees in which were nearly all maire.

1779. It is reported that there is gold to be got in this country: have you seen any that was got there?—No.

1780. Have you come across any one who has seen the gold?—Yes. Perhaps I ought to have said I have seen gold, but I do not believe it was got there. I saw a man who said he had got it there.

1781. Are you acquainted with mining?—A little. I was digging in Otago in the early days.

1782. And you know auriferous country when you see it?—Yes.

1783. And you say, from your own knowledge, that it is not an auriferous country?—I should say it is not, decidedly; that is, the part I have been speaking of.

1784. The country is principally limestone formation, I believe?—It is limestone.

1785. And papa rock?—There is no papa rock in the country that I have been talking about; it is sandstone; it has not got that slipperiness that papa rock has.

1786. *Mr. Montgomery.*] I do not understand you quite clearly in reference to the 90 miles marked on the map?—I say I know the country between the 90 miles marked on the map (No. 1) and Te Awamutu; that is, part of the red line on this map.

1787. You do not know south of the 90 miles?—No, not on that line; but I know the country generally.

1788. When you said 80 per cent. of it was fit for agriculture, do you mean land that can be ploughed?—Yes.

1789. And is there 80 per cent. of that land that is fit for the plough?—Fifty per cent. I think I said.

1790. I am speaking with regard to the 90 miles, as marked on the map, northwards to Te Awamutu?—There is 80 per cent. of that.

1791. By agricultural land, do you mean arable land?—It is ploughable land.

1792. Could the plough be put into it now?—The timber has never been cut off. It is raw land.

1793. And before you could plough it, you would require to clear and stump it?—Some people would do that; but others chop the trees down, and nature clears it for them. They sow it in grass, and in the course of a few years the stumps are sufficiently rotten to be pulled out, or a spark catches them, and they are burned. In the meantime, the owner makes a living in milk and butter out of the grass.

1794. But before you could plough it you would have to pull the stumps out?—You cannot plough it before the stumps are out; that, of course, is self-evident.

1795. Is the timber thick on the forest land that requires to be cleared before laying down in grass?—Yes.

1796. What would be the cost of felling and burning?—Felling and burning is worth from £1 17s. 6d. to £2 10s. per acre, according to the class of bush. It is very seldom as high as £2 10s. From £2 to £2 5s. is a fair thing; and grass and sowing would cost about 10s.

1797. And the other part that is open—the fern land: how much of that is fern that is not bush from the 90-mile mark to Te Awamutu?—That is all open land.

1798. How much of it is fern land, and how much forest?—There is no forest land there.

1799. No bush land?—No.

1800. Between the 90-mile mark and Te Awamutu there is no bush or forest land?—No.

1801. Along the line?—There are some clumps of white-pine trees down in the valleys, but there is no extent of country that I should call forest land.

1802. But bush land?—Nor bush land.

1803. At the 60-mile mark on the Stratford line you say it is very broken: did you go up and down the line at that broken part, or just cross it?—I went there with the intention of exploring the country for locating a line of railway, and I was occupied three weeks from the time I left the coast to the time I came out again at the coast. I walked nearly to the Ohura River. If this map (No. 1) is correct, I was just about the 60-mile mark.

1804. Did you go between the 60-mile mark and the 70-mile mark?—No. I was over the land between the 50 and 60.

1805. What is the nature of that part?—That is the broken country I have already described. It is called the Tangarakau country.

1806. *Mr. Larnach.*] For what length of time have you been acquainted with the nature of the country of which you have spoken?—I have been living in the colony, about New Plymouth, ever since I was an infant, for about forty years.

1807. And you say that for thirty to forty miles northward of Marton is very good country?—Yes,