

1894. Is it timbered land?—Yes.

1895. What sort?—Pines, and birch on the hills.

1896. Are there any valleys there?—Not of any extent. There are some gullies running up, but they are very narrow.

1897. Now, passing along that track, or anywhere during your surveys, did you see any stock there?—No.

1898. What is the description of the land to the eastward of the line?—There is a very fair valley going up between three and four miles eastward of the line, and in that there is an old Maori fern-clearing of about four hundred acres; and the rest of the land is very broken—very rough, especially to the south-east.

1899. Is the Committee to understand that out of the 30,000 acres the only piece of clear land is this one Maori clearing?—Yes; that is all.

1900. As you have surveyed that land, may I ask whether, if you wanted to buy a block of land either to farm or for some one else, you could pick out a block of 500 acres that would yield a man a living?—In that one particular spot I have referred to a man could get a living.

1901. But excluding that?—Hardly so; not 500 acres.

1902. There is not a block of 500 acres on that which would give a man a living?—No.

1903. *Mr. Larnach.*] For whom did you survey the 30,000-acre block?—For the Government.

1904. *Mr. Fergus.*] Is it one of Mr. Bayly's blocks?—I believe it is.

WEDNESDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. A. KOCH, Draughtsman, Public Works Department, examined.

1905. *The Chairman.*] I understand you have travelled over some of the middle part of this island with Dr. Hochstetter some years ago?—Yes.

1906. Would you tell the Committee all the information you are prepared to give them about this country. In the first place, perhaps, you would tell them what part of the country you have been over?—I have a little sketch in my pocket which I will show you. It shows the track we went over. I really only know about seventy-five miles of the country south of Te Awamutu.

1907. *Mr. Larnach.*] On which line?—From Te Awamutu south; part of it Mr. Holmes's route and part of it Mr. Rochfort's.

1908. *The Chairman.*] And this is the track (on map produced) over which you travelled?—Yes; a portion of that track is exactly the same as the western route.

1909. *Mr. Larnach.*] How many years ago was this?—Twenty-five years ago; it was about 1858 or 1859.

1910. Have you a perfect recollection of the countries?—I have a perfect recollection; and not only that, but I have also a lot of notes of my own, made at the time, which I have studied since receiving the summons to attend this Committee.

1911. *The Chairman.*] Taking that seventy-five miles over which you travelled south of Te Awamutu—that would be practically to Lake Taupo—is that country all open and fit for settlement?—The first fifteen or sixteen miles from Te Awamutu south is really fine country, after which it gets rough and broken, and pumice-stone country commences.

1912. Did you see anything in the way of minerals when you were travelling with Dr. Hochstetter?—We saw some coal at Tuhua, and a good deal of limestone beds.

1913. Did you see any trace of gold?—The Natives told us there was some quartz, but we saw no indication of it.

1914. Generally, what do you wish to convey to the Committee as to that part of the country you travelled: is it fit for settlement—fit for agricultural purposes—or what sort of country do you consider it?—I consider that all the way down as far as there are very fine flats for settlement. The range crosses the watershed of the Mokau.

1915. Do I understand you to say that down to where it crosses the watershed of the Mokau and Wanganui the land is all more or less fit for settlement, and is good land?—I would not call it very good land compared to some land that I have seen in New Zealand. It is fit for settlement, but I do not think the settlers would make much money out of it. It is not what I would consider first-class land.

1916. What sort of land do you call that about Te Kuiti?—It is fair alluvial soil; it is not, however, what I would call very good land.

Mr. KNORPP, Inspecting Engineer, further examined.

1917. *The Chairman.*] The Committee wish some further evidence in connection with the estimates of the Stratford and Marton lines. I hold in my hand the estimates submitted by Mr. Rochfort in connection with the Marton line, and I believe you have been over those estimates. Would you tell us what the prices are on which they have been run out?—I have only just had a look at them; I have not studied them.

1918. I understand you have made an estimate yourself?—I have made an estimate myself.

1919. Well, do yours and Mr. Rochfort's practically agree in regard to prices?—He has taken earthwork at 1s. 6d. per yard right through.

1920. To bring up the £3,000 for the permanent-way, what price do you take the ballast at?—We have taken the ballast at £200 per mile—that is, about 2s. 3d. per yard.

1921. *Mr. Larnach.*] That is, for laying the ballast about twelve feet wide?—The usual width of railway. And we have taken the platelaying at £100 per mile—that is, a little less than 1s. 6d.

1922. *The Chairman.*] What have you taken for the average price for sleepers?—£350 per mile; 2,020 to the mile, at 3s. 6d. each. The rails and fastenings we have taken at £750 per mile.