

2112. Could you indicate the exact locality?—It was in the Tuhua ranges.

2113. You know where the Stratford line runs?—Yes.

2114. You are satisfied that there is gold in that country?—Quite satisfied.¹

2115. Have you seen any indications of silver or other metals?—No. It appeared to me to be a limestone formation with quartz veins. There is an abundance of coal in the Mokau District.

2116. *The Chairman.*] Was the quartz of a similar nature to that of the Thames District?—Yes; but a little more friable.

2117. Was the gold of the same sort?—Yes; but it seemed to be rather richer than the Thames gold.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. MATHEW BARRY, Miner, examined.

2118. *The Chairman.*] This Committee has been appointed to inquire as to the best route for the North Island Main Trunk Railway, and we have been informed that you have had some experience in travelling through this country, and will be able to give us some idea of the nature of the country. Would you kindly tell us what part of the country you have travelled over?—I have travelled from Waitara and Urenui up the Mokau to Te Awamutu; also from Wanganui eastward through to Murimotu and between Tongariro and Ruapehu till I met the Wanganui River, and from the Wanganui River through the Tuhua country to Alexandra.

2119. What was your object in travelling through that country?—I was prospecting for gold.

2120. You say you went through the Tuhua country. What is the nature of the land traversed by the central and western routes?—From Alexandra to Taumaranui is very rich and level land, on the central route. I followed the central route through from Taumaranui to Te Awamutu.

2121. What is the nature of the land?—It is volcanic.

2122. Is the land fit for cultivation or is it pumice?—There is no pumice from mile 140 on the map to Alexandra.

2123. Have you any knowledge of the Stratford route?—Yes.

2124. What is the nature of the land there?—Very broken country at the head of the Mokau, and for thirty miles southward.

2125. Are there good indications of gold in that country?—You must please excuse me from answering that question.

2126. Our object in asking you to appear before the Committee was to obtain information of this kind. I only ask you the question in a general shape.—Well, the western line passes through auriferous country. After the central line leaves Taumaranui it goes through valueless broken country. From Taumaranui southwards for a few miles it goes through very heavy bush, and then, passing Tongariro and Ruapehu, it goes through volcanic and pumice country, valueless till it strikes heavy bush land again; and that heavy bush country is very much broken, as broken as the Stratford route. That is on the central line. Looking at it from a mineral point of view, I would not take 1,000 acres of the central line south of Ruapehu for the value of the fencing, but on the Stratford route I would take 100 acres if I could get it.

2127. *Mr. Larnach.*] From an agricultural point of view, what is your opinion of the two lines?—I did not see any land on the central line from Ruapehu down till you get near Marton. I do not consider any of that land fit for agriculture.

2128. Is there any on the Stratford line?—There are very large blocks on the Stratford line fit for agriculture that have been used in the olden times as Native settlements.

2129. *Mr. Fulton.*] What do you mean by "large blocks"?—There is one block estimated to comprise 200,000 acres, called Tongarake.

2130. *The Chairman.*] Do you mean to say that is all clear?—No.

2131. Give us an average size of these clearings?—About 600 acres.

2132. What do they run down to?—As low as 20 acres. I may mention there is a very valuable seam of coal of about 98 feet in width which the line cuts through on the Stratford route, at about forty-five miles from Stratford.

2133. *Mr. Montgomery.*] What is the character of the land from Ruapehu northward for twenty or thirty miles?—Up to Taumaranui it is very heavily timbered; where clear, it is pumice.

2134. And north of that?—It is all passable land. The farther you go north the better the land gets.

2135. *Mr. Larnach.*] You say the western line would run through auriferous country?—Yes.

2136. It will not be asking you too much to tell the Committee whether, in your opinion, it is likely to be richly auriferous, or is there merely the show of gold?—With all due respect to the Committee I must decline to answer that question. You see I am in a delicate position. There are thousands following my occupation who know me, and you must remember that this evidence will be printed, so that the slightest movement I make my footsteps will be dogged.

2137. You said it was auriferous?—But I did not say there was gold. I would like to keep that silent, if I can.

2138. But it is rich in minerals?—There is coal.

2139. And metals?—Very likely.

2140. In your opinion the Stratford route, both from an agricultural and mineral point of view, is a superior route to the others?—From an agricultural point of view I would not give much preference to either, because the country is much broken on either side. There is less of the bad country to go through on the Stratford line.

2141. I certainly understood you to say that both from an agricultural and mineral point of view you favoured the western route?—Certainly.

2142. Have you any idea of the quality of the seam of coal to which you have referred: is it lignite?—It is real coal, but I did not use any of it.