

time was as already described—namely, fertile papa formation. We found this valley a small fertile one, and soon were able to cross another watershed into the Wangamomona Valley, which is a splendid fertile valley over a dozen miles long.

6. Was the land you were travelling over generally good or bad land?—It was all good land. We never came across a single acre of bad land after five miles from the point of divergence.

7. The country is very much broken, is it not?—No, sir. In the Tangarakau Gorge it is very broken, but all these rivers which have big valleys have ridges.

8. You speak of big valleys. What would be their width?—Some are only a mile, and some are three miles.

9. Are the sides very precipitous?—No; all the country would be suitable for settlement.

10. The reason I ask this question is that in the evidence of 1884 it was said that from the 25-mile peg to the 70-mile peg the land was about the worst in New Zealand, and most broken?—Well, Sir, the Wangamomona Valley, which I am describing, is about thirteen miles by two and a half (I am putting it at the minimum), and is all flat land. I have never seen better land in New Zealand. It is magnificent country.

11. What point on the route have you reached now?—I have come to the 45-mile peg, on the plan before me, and here we cross a spur about 700ft. high, and get into the Mangere Valley, which will be marked 40 on the map. This valley is not so good as the Wangamomona, or so fit for ploughing purposes, being very broken. The timber here was chiefly teridi and tawa. It was not birch-land. The woods I have mentioned burn well. The guide, Julien, who was with us, offered to take any contract we liked to give him at 15s. an acre.

12. This indicates a very light growth?—The bush is so compact that it has no room to grow, and teridi and tawa do not grow to any thickness in any part of the colony. It would be an extremely large tree that would span 2ft. The average is about 18in.

We next crossed the Matemateonga Range, and went down the fertile valley of the Makahu, and thence left the watershed of the Wanganui River tributaries, and crossed over a range into the watershed of the Patea River. We descended the Mangaotuku, and about thirty-seven miles from Stratford met the party from that town, which had come along the East Road from Stratford to meet us. From thence you can ride to Stratford, and I need not describe the country from here into that town, as it is well-known country. But throughout the whole time there were no engineering difficulties to be met with, and the land is the same as I have already described.

13. Did you come across any birch or poor clayey land?—We never saw half an acre of clayey soil; it was all papa rock. At least three-quarters of the whole land we saw on that journey was fit for settlement, especially fertile were the Wangamomona and Ohura Valleys, and not an acre of black-birch land was there on our journey.

14. *Mr. Mills*: Did you at any time get a fair view of the country from any elevated place?—Yes, we could get a good view at eight different spots, and we could see the whole surrounding country.

15. What width is the track?—There is no track at all. We had to cut our way through with slashers, and could not have got through by any other means.

16. Could you form any idea as to what proportion there was between land heavily timbered, such as rimu land and the tawa land?—The greater portion of the land is tawa and the like timber. Only a small proportion is heavily timbered.

17. Is there much totara?—In the Wangamomona Valley there was a little totara, but very little rimu.

Hon. Mr. CADMAN sworn, and examined.

*Hon. Mr. Cadman*: I was asked by the Auckland Railway League to give them my opinion as to which line should be constructed, and the answer I sent them was that I would express no opinion as to either route until I had been over both. I supported the vote for the central route, being greatly influenced to do so by the opinions expressed by Mr. Mitchelson, who was an authority on the question at that time, and who had gone to a good deal of trouble over the matter. The Auckland people wanted the Stratford line constructed, and asked me to act with them, but I answered that, before I gave them an answer, I would go over the lines. I started from Hunterville, and went to Kerioi, a distance of sixty miles. I did not go through the Waimarino Block, as I had a block of land offered to me by the Natives, named Puketapu, and I was desirous of having the land for settlement as a feeder to the central line. But to return: we went on from Hunterville till we struck the main road leading from Kerioi to Napier. From Hunterville to this road I thought the land first-class. I am not a competent judge of land; but what I formed my opinion from was the height of the cocksfoot. It was nearly ripe at the time we rode through, and Mr. Lawry, who was on a good-sized horse, rode into the grass, and tied the heads of the cocksfoot over his horse's neck. After we left the Awarua Block the land was not so good, but for all that it was still good, till we reached the Napier Road. I cannot give you the distance. We then rode on to Kerioi, and though at first the land was not first-class, it was not poor, judging from much of the land I have seen in the Auckland District. It gradually got worse as we advanced; and before we got to Kerioi we were among stuff very much like the Kiangaroo Plains, covered with tussock. We struck what I may call second-class land at Taumaranui; and it continued till we came to Mokau. Comparing this land with the whole district, I consider it to be only medium. Well, then I came back with some Auckland people, right through to Wellington. From Ongarue, where the junction is, for about ten miles, or perhaps twelve miles, the land was middling, if it was even that. It was certainly not first-class; but after that it seemed to improve as we advanced right through to the end of the line. At some places, however, it is very rough. We passed through several flats like the Hutt Valley, and the rough country was alongside these valleys; and yet this hilly land seemed to be good. Anyhow, it was the class of soil that would carry grass easily. In the distance we could see hills like those of Wellington. That is, when we were in elevated situations, for we were travelling through bush.