

14. You assume that coal from Whangarei to Auckland would be carried by railway?—That is so.
15. *Mr. Coom.*] Could you tell the Commission from which point you would start the branch to Dargaville?—It is not for me to say. I should think.
16. You think it possible to make a route?—Yes, from somewhere south of McCarroll's Gap. I am not prepared to say where it should go from.
17. Is there a large area of land in this district capable of growing fruit?—I consider so.
18. Is there a market for it?—Yes. Auckland and farther south.
19. Can you tell me the comparative areas of good and bad land on the east and the west? Is there more bad land on the east or the west—say, within a distance of five or six miles of the proposed railway?—I consider that the land on the eastern side is more capable of being developed by the plough than the land on the western side. It is more undulating.
20. There is a greater area of land capable of being developed on the eastern side than on the western side?—Yes.
21. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] Can you give any idea of the distance from Maungakarama to the Wairoa River in a direct line?—It is not very far.
22. More than twenty miles?—I would say so.
23. If there are only a few miles between the eastern and western routes and twenty miles from Dargaville, and you are only twelve miles from Mangapai, would not the western route be the most central?—I do not think so.
24. You agree that there should be a branch line from the Gap to Whangarei?—I think it is good business.
25. Do you know the route that is suggested for that connection?—Not definitely.
26. Do you know how far it would go from this place?—No.
27. Have you heard it stated that the line will come from somewhere north of McCarroll's Gap to Maungakarama and on to Whangarei?—I have not heard it stated.
28. If we have a line from McCarroll's Gap to Whangarei which goes *via* Maungakarama, do you think it would be good business also to put the central line through Maungakarama?—I do not say that the railway should come here for the purpose of developing Maungakarama, but to develop the country farther ahead.
29. You would not, as a business man, put two lines through the country within a mile or two of each other, would you?—I consider there must be a connection with Whangarei, as a town of importance.
30. You are within twelve miles of Mangapai, and the Whangarei-Gap connection must pass somewhere on that twelve-mile line: you do not suggest that it should go to Mangapai?—No.
31. Would that line go within six miles of Maungakarama?—What I mean is this: If the line goes *via* the eastern route, I advocate a connection with Whangarei, but if the line does not go either east or west it would be good business for the line to go to Whangarei straight to the Gap.
32. You advocate the central line as the first consideration?—Yes.
33. And whether east or west you would still have the central route for development purposes?—Yes.
34. As the connection between Whangarei and the Gap must pass within ten miles, if you like, of Maungakarama, would it not therefore be unwise to put the central line also at Maungakarama or thereabouts?—If the central line is adopted I am not prepared to say where the connection to Whangarei should be from.
35. Have you seen it stated that the McCarroll's Gap - Whangarei line would be twenty-seven miles?—That is so.
36. Then, that must be from somewhere that is north of McCarroll's Gap?—From the nearest point to Whangarei.
37. How far is this place from Whangarei?—Fourteen miles.
38. Then, if the line is to be twenty-seven miles the connection could not be from here?—No.
39. *Mr. Steadman.*] Do you know how far it is from Mangapai to the east coast?—I could not say definitely.
40. You do not know how far it is from Mangapai to Marsden Point?—About thirty miles.
41. *The Chairman.*] Is that thirty miles across the water, or round the bay by land?—It is forty miles to Waipu, and Marsden Point is on the same line, but not so far away.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD examined. (No. 47.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a farmer, residing at Maungakarama, where I hold 510 acres, and I am in company with two sons in 1,680 acres in the Northern Wairoa, on the Awakino Creek. All my land is freehold. I have been in the district just on forty-six years.
2. Would you make a statement to the Commission?—I may say that I quite agree with what Mr. O'Carroll has said about the Main Trunk going east of the Tangihua Range, with a branch to Whangarei, and also a branch to Dargaville. I think if the Main Trunk line was pushed on without connecting with those two centres it would be a very poor-paying proposition, because we must always look to the population to find the traffic for a railway. I may say that I am one of the old settlers of Maungakarama. I was the son of a pioneer, and in the early days we had to cut our way through as best we could. We were not spoon-fed by the Government, but had to cut our own tracks to our sections. Many a time the settlers would go to Mangapai for a bag of flour, only to find that the cutter was not there, and they would have to live on pork. The families of those old pioneers are still here, and they are the principal part of Maungakarama to-day. We have had a hard struggle to get the district