

61. Your statement does not apply to the line north of McCarroll's Gap, which the Commissioners are now considering?—No, my statement covered the whole line from Kaiwaka northwards.

62. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] You do not think it would be satisfactory to the country to have the main line made by connecting with Whangarei from McCarroll's Gap?—If I was living in the north I would object to going round all that distance for all time.

63. You are also of opinion, no doubt, that the time must come, and before very long, when Whangarei will be connected with the Main Trunk?—I think it will have to come.

64. When that time does come, where do you think that Whangarei line will cross the Mangapai—Maungakaramea Road?—The line should follow approximately Knorpp's survey to Whangarei.

65. Do you know where Knorpp's line crosses the Mangapai Road?—I cannot say positively—I have not got the plans with me—but I think it is somewhere between Waikiekie and Mangapai.

66. Can you give an estimate of the distance to Whangarei from where the line will cross near Mangapai?—I cannot give you an estimate.

67. Providing Whangarei has a connection with the Main Trunk line, which will come within, say, half a dozen miles of Maungakaramea, do you think it ought to pay?—It is not Maungakaramea alone we have to consider, but Mangakahia and all the country as a whole.

68. Presuming you have a Whangarei branch line connecting with the Main Trunk, which we are informed must go near Maungakaramea, would you advocate the central line also running from Maungakaramea to the east of the Tangihuas?—It ought to continue on and go straight through the centre of the peninsula to the far north. There should be no deviation of the Main Trunk Railway to accommodate a section of people a hundred miles nearer the market than the people of the far north. The people of the far north need the most consideration.

69. Can you give us any reason why several witnesses at Whangarei, such as Mr. J. G. Mackenzie, Mr. Mackesy, Mr. Miller, Mr. Mulhern, and others I think, pronounced themselves in favour of the Main Trunk Railway going to the west of the Tangihua Range?—I cannot be responsible for other people's opinions. I express my own.

70. With reference to these big estates on the west of the Tangihuas, can you name any of them?—Harding and Co. have a very large estate.

71. What estate is there going north of Kirikopuni?—Mr. Mitchelson is my authority for saying that one of the Hardings has six miles of country there.

72. Do you know that the Karaka Estate has been all cut up, and that he does not own it now?—I do not know that.

73. That is one of the large blocks you refer to, I presume?—Yes. Do you not remember Mr. Poole stating in the House that he went up the Wairoa River, and asked who the land belonged to, and was told "Harding, Harding," all the way up.

74. I am taking your own statement that these large estates exist north of Kirikopuni. If you had said south of Kirikopuni I would not have differed with you. We also have it in evidence that 7,000 acres of the Mangaru Block has also been sold by Mr. Harding?—I did not understand that. The names given to me as owners of large estates west of the range are Bailey, Dryden, Riddell, and the three Hardings. And I believe Mr. Niccol, of Auckland, owns a large block too.

75. Then, your large estates are here, there, or anywhere?—These I refer to are on the western route.

76. Have you heard Mr. Cuddie, the Chief Dairy Commissioner, say, or seen the statements he has made, in reference to the suitability of the lands on the Wairoa side for dairying?—No.

77. Would you be surprised to hear he has said they will make the best dairying district in the whole Dominion?—Some of the land may.

78. Mr. Cuddie was speaking generally of the whole district?—I think, then, he is wrong.

79. You say you have been through the land on the west of the Tangihuas?—Yes.

80. Have you been through the land that lies between the range and the river?—Some of it, but not all.

81. How did you travel there?—I got through between the mountains by Maungakaramea and through to Riddell's country. I have been to Birch's, on the other side.

82. Have you heard any single person object to a bridge at Kirikopuni on account of the obstruction to the river?—Yes, I saw an account of an objection in the paper the other day.

83. Do you know how far the Kirikopuni Bridge would be from the Tangiteroria Road bridge?—About four miles, roughly.

84. And if the railway-bridge is as high as the Tangiteroria Bridge, would there be any obstruction?—When you get up above Tangiteroria the water is getting shallower, and you cannot get big vessels up.

85. We have the Harbourmaster's evidence that there is 18 ft. at Kirikopuni, and that below there, there is a shallow patch which at low water is only covered by 6 ft. of water?—I did not know that, but you could easily remove that patch in case of emergencies.

86. Can you say anything as to the progress that has taken place in the western district in the last few years?—I think there has been considerable progress in the last few years since the timber has been cut out.

87. Can you name any other district in the north that has made such progress as the western district?—I think the eastern side has made equal progress since the creameries started.

88. What is the relative increase?—Now you are asking me something I have not gone into.

89. *Mr. Becroft.*] In your suggestions you mentioned the Otamatea, and especially the eastern Otamatea: do you not consider that is too far south for the Commission to consider?—I only mentioned that in order to show the population.