

22. Are there any large areas of gum land on the eastern side?—Yes; but there is a large portion of poor country on the eastern route.

23. Would you describe it as pipeclay land?—Yes.

24. Could it be made to grow *paspalum* grass?—I have seen *paspalum* tried at Te Arai, where there is the poorest land, and in Mangapai, and it is generally a failure on gum land. It might grow gum-trees.

25. Would not such land be suitable for growing fruit?—I do not think so.

26. Previous witnesses have stated that the western route was far more suitable for the raising of sheep than for cattle, owing to its being so broken: is that your opinion?—A lot of that land would be very suitable for dairying purposes, for rearing sheep, and fattening stock generally.

27. A witness also stated that land at Paparoa which ten years ago was of excellent quality had after that time gone back to fern: what is your experience of such land?—The land which has gone back to fern at Paparoa is, generally speaking, not the good land. There is as good land there now as ever there was.

28. Have you had any experience in the growing of *paspalum*?—Yes.

29. Would that grass do for the pipeclay country?—I think so. It does not grow for the first few years, but when it starts it makes a start; it is excellent grass.

30. What is the approximate cost of breaking in gum land for dairying?—A great deal depends on the general character of the land. Some of the land I had to plough cost me £1 an acre for ploughing for turnips, which grew splendidly.

31. *Mr. Steadman.*] What was the total cost of getting the land ready?—Say, £1 10s. per acre.

32. *Mr. Ronayne.*] I was informed in the far north that *teraire* timber was of no use: do you agree with that statement?—The piece of timber I showed you had been in the building for thirty years. Personally I have not used the timber, but I have sent samples to Australia, and I have executed orders for it at a price equal to that paid for first-class kauri in Sydney. I refer to the time when kauri was much lower in price than it is now.

33. Is it a much better timber than the *kahikatea*?—Yes, for the reason that it is not subject to dry rot.

34. Does it lend itself to seasoning readily?—Yes, it makes excellent furniture.

35. How do you send it away?—In fitches and boards of different sizes. Saxon and Binn, large timber-merchants in Sydney, asked me to send them more, and offered me my own price for it. The bush in the Mangakahia Valley and towards Kaikohe is full of this timber. Kauri now costs over £1 per 100 ft., but this timber can be produced for half that price.

36. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] You have had forty years' experience, I understand, of the country east and west of the Tangihua Range?—Yes.

37. Do you agree with the statement that the land in the west is capable of carrying two sheep to the acre?—It will do that fully. I carry five thousand on 3,000 acres, and the sheep are fat most of the year.

38. Can you give some figures as to your experience many years ago as to the fattening of stock on the western side?—Yes. At one time nobody owned the land, and the settlers at Mangapai, Waikiekie, and Maungakaramea used to send their cattle there and leave them there all the winter. These cattle were equal to any cattle raised on turnips. I took a considerable number around to the Wairoa, and a good many were sold in Auckland for £20 per head.

39. Are those lands now carrying an equal amount of stock to what they then carried?—The land is producing a larger number of stock since it has been cleared than it did many years ago.

40. Would you agree with a previous witness who said that in a few years the carrying-capacity of this land would be lost?—Not at all. In the Mangakahia Valley you will see grass as good as any in the country free from weeds.

41. I believe you are a member of the Land Board?—Yes.

42. Can you tell us what quantity of Native land lies on the western side from McCarroll's Gap to Houto?—I do not think there is a great quantity of Native land there, and most of it is in the hands of private owners. Boxer and Sievwright own some, and there is some Native settlement about Tangiteroria.

43. I believe that on the Land Board you represent the Crown tenants?—I do.

44. Can you describe where the Crown tenants are to be found on the western route, and how they are affected by that route?—Their holdings lie west of the Tangihuas.

45. What settlements are there?—Mangakahia, Mangatu, and Waimatanui.

46. Are there any Crown tenants at Kirikopuni?—No; there are Crown tenants in the Avoca.

47. Are there any on the Girls' High School Reserve?—There are a large number there, but that is on the eastern side of the Wairua River.

48. Is Okahu pretty well occupied by small holdings?—There are several 40-acre sections there, but no Crown tenants.

49. I suppose you have a good knowledge of the large holdings which would be affected by the western route from Waikiekie northwards?—Omano is the largest, and I think Nicol has a fair-sized piece, but as soon as you get outside that you meet with the Crown tenants.

50. If the western district is as good as it is represented, how is it that it has not developed as largely as the eastern district?—It has been held largely by timber companies, and has never been opened up by roads as is the case with the eastern country. While the timber industry was booming in the Wairoa there was no agitation to open up these blocks. The Kauri Timber Company did not want settlers to fire their bushes, but as soon as they got the timber out they sold the land to settlers of means, who are now cutting up the blocks.