

144. The Mangapai freight is 5s. a ton by scow and 12s. 6d. a ton by steamer; that is one-half of the freight to Dargaville?—Yes; the railway gets 15s. of the Dargaville rate.

145. Take to Kirikopuni; that is roughly about 122 miles by the line?—I do not know whether you are aware that though the rate from Auckland to Helensville for goods is 12s. 6d., for persons residing at Helensville it is about £1. It does not really matter what the rates are they will be by scale, on the Main Trunk line by mileage.

146. From the landing at Mangapai, what freight would go from the railway to Mangapai?—None at all.

147. Is it not a fact that this eastern route would be barren as far as freights are concerned from approximately McCarroll's Gap to Maungakaramea?—Yes.

148. Now, on the western side, the Omano people border on the Wairoa River, do they not?—Yes.

149. And they have to go right across the peninsula to Mangapai with their products if they send them there for shipment?—If they thought of doing so, of course; but they are served by the Wairoa.

150. Do you know that fat stock and lambs have been driven by cattle-buyers from Omano and shipped at Mangapai?—I have not heard of it. A great many sheep and cattle from this district come down to Northern Wairoa: far more than go the other way. Cattle-buyers start on the Northern Wairoa and pick up cattle from farm to farm as they go along, and will take cattle to the nearest point. Last summer I passed two thousand head coming by way of Henderson to Auckland, many of them from the Northern Wairoa.

151. We have had evidence that fat stock were taken out of the Northern Wairoa and driven to the rail-head. If the railway was up there the fat stock would be taken to the railway at once?—Yes; and store stock driven.

152. All along the Wairoa is dairying-country: would not that railway be a means of carrying butter-fat to the different factories, and thus be the means of closer settling the lands?—Of course the line itself will induce settlement.

153. Would it not make the whole of the western lands dairying-country?—Certainly, if the land was taken out of the hands of the large owners.

154. But the eastern route would not assist that portion of the Wairoa as dairying-country?—That is so; but the same thing would apply to the eastern side.

155. Is there any dairying you know of on the western side to-day?—No.

156. Is there on the east?—Yes, at Maungakaramea, Waikiekie, and Maungatapere.

157. Will the railway going by the east develop the dairying industry any more than it is developed at present by the factories at the places you have mentioned?—I do not think it would for one side or the other.

158. What dairying is done on the western side?—Nothing.

159. If the railway went there would it not be the means of making all the western route available for dairying?—For dairying or sheep, whichever paid best.

160. And the eastern route would not open up any new country for dairying?—It would open up all the eastern side of the Tangihua Mountains—between them and Maungatapere and right on to Poroti, Purua, and Moengawahine.

161. How far is that area from Maungakaramea?—Seven or eight miles.

162. Where is the land that would be benefited?—The eastern route would open the Whatitiri land for dairying.

163. Do you know the Whatitiri Valley?—I have been over it scores of times.

164. Is not that valley nearer to Maungatapere than to the railway-line?—Not the whole of it. One-half would be nearer.

165. One-half would go to Maungatapere?—Yes; and the other half would go the other way.

166. Is not the other half nearer to Maungakaramea?—No.

167. After you get away from that good land, there is the poorer class of land on the east coast?—Yes.

168. That, you think, would be brought into cultivation by the railway?—Yes.

169. What would it produce?—Grass, and that produces butter.

170. What would be the procedure of putting it into grass?—Plough it.

171. What would it cost to cut the ti-tree?—It would cost £5 or £6 an acre, including fencing, to bring it in to be of any good. That, of course, is exclusive of the cost of the land.

172. How long would the grass remain on it?—Absolutely for ever, if top-dressed and treated properly.

173. Without any further expenditure?—No; you would have to top-dress with basic slag and potash.

174. How often?—Every seven years.

175. What would that cost?—£2 an acre.

176. Would the western lands be brought into grass for £3 an acre?—For £3 or £4 an acre.

177. How do you make it £4?—If you include fencing it would be so; but fencing perhaps should not be included in the cost, for so much depends on the nature of the fence and the size of the paddocks. The way I treat the gum land is to plough it once in the autumn, and disc it several times, and let it lie fallow, sowing the seed the following March, and the following autumn I top-dress. I treated one piece of land that way eight years ago, and it is as good as anything about Mangere.

178. How much does it cost to clear the ti-tree?—£1 5s. an acre.

179. How much per acre to plough it?—14s.

180. How much to disc it?—Say, 12s. an acre.

181. What would be the cost of manuring?—4 cwt. to the acre—£1 15s.