

42. How could it be served by the Main Trunk line?—Through Whangarei, I suppose.
43. You do not suggest that the north should be left with the Whangarei connection?—Certainly not.
44. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] Do you know that the Inspector of Mines has declared that there is coal right through this district?—Yes.
45. Do you not think it is probable that we shall have coal here, the same as on the other side?—I see no reason why we should not.
46. You have been asked a question with reference to railways paying: which railways pay best at the present time—those in the North Island or those in the South Island?—The North Island.
47. Have recent constructions of railways in the North Island been through districts superior to these, or have we a district as good as those through which railways have been constructed?—I am not very well acquainted with the lower part of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, but I maintain that this railway will go through better country than the Main Trunk does as far as Taumarunui.
48. There is no reason to suggest that a railway here, whether on the eastern or the western route, will be unpayable?—Not at all.
49. Is it not a fact that the extension of the Kaihu line will bring to the Crown increased royalties sufficient to make the whole extension?—I maintain that the increased royalties alone will make the railway-line right up to Hokianga.
50. That the cost of construction will be met by the increased royalties on timber?—Without a doubt.
51. You have given an estimate of 300,000,000 ft. of timber: is that excessive, or a moderate estimate?—It is not my own; it is Mr. James Maxwell's estimate, and he is one of the best timber experts in the north. He is in charge of the State forest at present, and knows every acre of the country.
52. What would be the effect of the extension of the Kaihu line on settlement in the north? How soon would that settlement affect the railway without the timber?—A matter of ten or twelve years, taking the present rate of expansion.
53. So that the freight on timber would continue to make the line payable until the settlement itself could maintain the line?—There can be no question about it.
54. Putting it in another way, the only way to make the Kaihu line pay, and pay well, is to extend it into the timber country?—That is so. It certainly would not pay if extended merely to induce settlement.
55. Can you remember how many years ago you heard it prophesied that the timber industry would soon be played out?—About thirteen years ago I was told that in a few years the timber would be finished; but, taking the rate of the destruction in the past, I think they had fair grounds for saying so, because there were vast areas burned every year, which is not the case now. I have known thousands of acres of first-class kauri to be burned for no reason at all—not even surface-sowing the land.
56. The timber industry has decreased somewhat, has it not?—In the immediate district I think it has decreased considerably during the last five or six years.
57. Taking into consideration the decrease of timber which lessened the output of the district, and at the same time the increased settlement and dairying, is our district any worse off because of the decrease in timber?—I think we are better off, because dependence was put on the bush work, but since the bush work has ceased people have concentrated more of their energies on the land, and they are making good headway.
58. In the future this country, by reason of the dairying and so on, will be a payable centre?—I think it will make it more payable than any other in New Zealand.
59. *Mr. Steadman.*] Is anything being done to replace the timber?—No.
60. Do you know how long the settlers inland from Tokatoka have been occupying their land?—I do not.
61. Do you think they have been occupying it as long as the settlers in Mareretu and Maungakaramaea?—I think longer.
62. Could you indicate by what road you would get your goods from Auckland when either of these Main Trunk sections are put in?—Until we have a railway connecting from Dargaville with either of the proposed lines there is no question that it will be necessary to get them from Auckland as at present, unless the freights from Auckland to Kirikopuni by rail, and from Kirikopuni to Dargaville, will be less than by the other way.
63. What is the distance from Kirikopuni to Dargaville by river?—It might be twenty-five to thirty miles.
64. The eastern route is sixteen miles from Dargaville and fourteen miles from Whangarei?—Yes.
65. And the western route is nineteen miles from Whangarei and eleven miles from Dargaville?—That is so, I think. Those are straight measurements.
66. *Mr. Becroft.*] What extent of country will those 300,000,000 ft. of timber be extended over?—I could not give the area.
67. Do you consider that the best way to feed the Kaihu extension would be to keep this land for timber purposes, or to open it for settlement?—I would not like to make an assertion. Both are important. We have timber to a certain extent, and we can keep it as a feeding-ground for the railway, and whenever the timber is removed open the land for settlement.
68. That is a slow process of settlement?—Yes, but it would not apply to all the routes of the line. There are great tracts of country not affected by the bush at all.