

6. Has the railway so far passed through land likely to maintain a railway or not?—Up to Te Hana it passes through poorer land on the whole than it will until it gets to Awanui. The only place you could call good land is a little bit of flat at Helensville and a little bit at Kaipara Flats.

7. Then, in your opinion, even were the statement of the Minister correct—which I presume you deny—it would still be advisable to continue the railway, in order to make the other portion payable by the good country and the resources farther north?—Most decidedly. It is the through Trunk lines that pay best.

8. The quality of the land and the producing-power from McCarroll's Gap right away to Awanui would make the other portion of the line nearer to Auckland pay better?—Undoubtedly.

9. *Mr. Becroft.*] In your opinion, would this poor tract of country from Auckland to the Otamatea Bridge compare with the poor country between Pukekohe and the Waikato Basin?—It is better. Generally this country is better, with richer spots at intervals.

10. *Mr. Stalworthy.*] Is it not a fact that the country opens out as you get on?—Yes.

11. *The Chairman.*] The population of the North Auckland peninsula is between sixty-five and seventy thousand is it not?—Yes.

12. What is the population of Auckland City?—101,000, estimated.

13. And the main part of the population is north of McCarroll's Gap, in the North Auckland peninsula?—Yes.

14. Do you think that the population at the two termini of the railway would justify completing the Main Trunk line?—I think it justifies it at present, without saying what is to be done in the future.

15. What is the state of the North Auckland peninsula from McCarroll's Gap as regards population?—It is only scratched.

16. And your opinion is that the North Auckland peninsula will carry a greater population per acre than any other part of the Dominion of New Zealand?—I think so.

NUKUTAWHITI, WEDNESDAY, 26TH APRIL, 1911.

HIRE MOKENA WHAREPAPA examined. (No. 37.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You desire to address the Commission?—I have a few words to say. We are anxious to have the railway through the centre of our land. A number of Natives were waiting to give evidence last week, but they had to go away. The line that we are anxious to get through here is the North Auckland Main Trunk. The Governor came through here some years ago, and he was asked to tell the Government to spend money in this district to have a road made, and the promise was given that that would be done. Three years after that they started the road. We are anxious to have the railway through here, because this is good land.

2. *Mr. Coom.*] Is all the land about here in the hands of the Natives?—All the land on the west belongs to the Government.

3. Are the Natives prepared to produce anything on their land?—Yes.

4. *Mr. Evans.*] How many acres of Native land are there in this district?—Between 8,000 and 10,000 acres.

5. What is the value per acre?—It is valued roughly at £1 to £2 per acre, unimproved.

6. Would you sell at that?—Yes.

7. *Mr. Ronayne.*] There are two routes, the eastern and western, coming from McCarroll's Gap towards Kaikohe, but they meet farther down the valley than this. You want the western route in preference to the eastern route: what is your reason for the preference?—The eastern and the western routes join farther down, but if it goes by the eastern route the line may be continued on to Whangarei, and it would be the next generation before it comes further north this way, and the name North Auckland Main Trunk Railway means the main one, and ought to go in the centre.

8. *The Chairman.*] How many owners are there in these 8,000 or 10,000 acres you speak of?—About a thousand.

9. What are the names of the blocks?—Mimitu, Mangakohatu, Aruarei, Parahaki, Opouteke, Ahiehekotoru, and Paraieotane.

10. Are you in all these blocks?—Yes.

GEORGE RUDELL examined. (No. 38.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a farmer, residing at Pakotai, and have lived in the Mangakahia Valley for sixteen years. I think the line should go upon the western route, as opening up the best country. I know the country on both sides very well. The eastern side, generally speaking, contains poorer country than the other. All the good land is in the centre, where visitors never go near.

2. As far as your property is concerned, it is immaterial whether the line goes east or west?—That is so.

3. You are simply speaking in the interests of the Dominion when you say that the west side is the better?—Yes. Some of the best country is on the west of the Tangihua Mountains.