

a variety of attractions. It is useless to develop Rotorua by itself: you must have other things to show the tourists. When you come from the great centres of civilization and get as far as Australia you think you are on the outer edge of things, and there are 1,200 miles to be traversed to reach New Zealand. It is useless to say, "There is Rotorua and nothing else"; but if you can say that they can easily go to Rotorua, to Waiotapu—where there is a different range of sights—and from there to Huka Falls and the Aratiatia Rapids, to Rotokawa, and then on to Taupo, to the mountains, and on down the Wanganui River, there is a tourist route without rival in the world. The railway which we are advocating will enable the tourist to make that trip easily and comfortably. The railway has many advantages over the motor for this trip. As a rule the average overseas tourist has a good deal of luggage, and he can take it on the railway but not on the motor. Again, in bad weather the railway is the more convenient and comfortable for travelling on, and from the point of view of invalids there is no comparison. Again, for those who are not over-blessed with this world's goods, it would be far cheaper to go to Taupo in the train than by motor. There are some exceptional features about this country: at Waiotapu and Rotokawa there are great deposits of sulphur. These have been bought from the Maoris, and it has been suggested that they should be worked. Questions have been asked in the House of Representatives about them, and on one occasion the Minister replied that the Crown had bought 1,400 acres at Taupo containing sulphur deposits, but that until there were better means of communication these could not be developed. That was in 1921. In regard to oil, Professor Park made a report in 1924, reporting favourably, and concluded his report by saying that the association of volcanic conditions and oil was well known in some important oilfields. Then there is the question of the use of natural steam. It has been utilized in the United States and in Italy. In Italy there are extensive works, and also in California there are works using natural steam from the earth. In England it has been said that it would pay to sink so far into the earth as to get heat, but in New Zealand we have this vast quantity of power going to waste on the very surface. I want also to draw your attention to the fact that if this railway goes through to Taupo it will tap a great lake with 150 miles of deep water frontage, and from that it would draw immense traffic. I want to say also that a railway to a large extent creates its own traffic, and that is one of the greatest tests of the usefulness of a railway. I can well remember the agitation in Auckland to have the Wellington-Auckland Railway built not down the centre of the Island, but down through Taranaki. There was a cry, "Stratford or nothing." But the Auckland-Wellington Railway has been the great success of railway-construction in New Zealand. People said it would not be a success because it would go through deserts. But those deserts have been created into farms and many prosperous townships—Te Kuiti, Te Awamutu, Otorohanga, Ohakune, Taihape, and so on. These are prosperous towns where nothing existed before, where half-a-crown-an-acre land is now selling for £20 a foot. The measure of the success of a railway is very largely the amount of traffic it creates, and I say that a railway through the centre of the Island to the east of Taupo will develop as great traffic as that railway to the west of Lake Taupo. I have here a few figures giving returns of visitors to Wairakei: In 1927 the total resident visitors to Wairakei was 13,274, but this figure could be increased to quite 30,000 if the day trippers were added. [Exhibit 3.] The people who stay at Wairakei Hotel are only a fraction of the people who go to Taupo. The business is there, and if the railway fails to get the business it is the fault of the railway and not of the country. Also, in connection with the new road which is going through to Waikaremoana, this railway will bring the live-stock from the Hawke's Bay District by that route. It is only about eighty miles from Waiotapu to Wairoa, in Hawke's Bay. At the present time East Coast stock has to travel about 250 miles to reach the Waikato, but this route would enable farmers to truck their stuff and bring it to any part of the Auckland Province very quickly. As to the business already being done, Murupara is forty-two miles from Rotorua Station, and the traffic from that country is coming out by Reporoa. If the railway is brought twenty miles nearer, that will be an added facility, and the railway will get all the traffic, and the traffic for another twenty miles further back. The traffic from Taharua and Loch Inver comes to Rotorua, a distance of about eighty miles. If the railway is taken to Taupo, that will reduce their distance to twenty or twenty-five miles. Their traffic will come to the railway. This railway, in some respects, may be said to be capable of being built without cost. The Crown Lands Department gave evidence that there were 700,000 acres of Crown lands between Rotorua and Taupo, and any settler would give £1 an acre for land with a railway there rather than take it for nothing without a railway. There is no reason why the land should not bear an assessment to pay for the railway, and also the timber. The saving on the freight on the timber from the Mokai Bush alone would pay for this railway and leave £300,000 to the good. That bush alone, apart from the Government plantations, and other native bushes, would pay for it. I may say in this connection that some years ago I went to a good deal of trouble in getting the signature of every white owner of land in the district, and nearly every Native, agreeing to an assessment on the land for the railway, but it was turned down. I think I remarked before that Governments think that the expenditure of £700,000 where there are no votes is a waste of public funds. With regard to the alternative suggestion of a road, I respectfully submit that for the development of an area like this a road is useless, and many respects worse than useless. As far as I am concerned, I would sooner have the road we have at present than have a bitumen-surfaced road. It is a tourist road upon which motors are flying along every five minutes, and it is impossible to move stock on such a road. It is not like an ordinary farmers' road—it is on a tourist route. I would like to see a ditch put across it every 50 yards so that motors could not make their fifty miles an hour on it. The traffic through there is such that before many years not only one railway will be required but several railways. I am informed that the capital cost of this road is going to be as much as the railway, and I say it will be a public crime to spend that money upon a useless road when the same amount will provide you with a first-class railway.