

58. Your statement is that it will be a benefit to this Government if they take the land?—Certainly.

59. My contention is that you are asking for every advantage of the fullest value for the land?

*Mr. Kyle:* A point of order, Mr. Chairman. I do not see why you should give your opinion at the present time.

*The Chairman:* I am only giving my opinion.

*Witness:* If you think that the offer is not couched in binding terms, give it to the Crown Solicitor to draft, and I will sign it.

60. *The Chairman:* But I am giving the purport and effect of it?—But it is quite clear.

61. Now, you said in your evidence, "I think I can claim that if anybody in this Dominion deserves the construction of a railway I do"?—Quite so.

62. Can you tell this Committee why you as an individual should deserve the construction of a railway?—I went into that country in 1907 when there was only one other white man in it. To get on to the country we had to swim the river. I brought that land from a state of nature, and proved the possibilities for 5,000,000 acres of country. I think I have deserved well of my country. When my teams are turning over two furrows of good land which from the dawn of time has yielded nothing, I think I am deserving well of my country. I have spent large sums of money there, and if I am despoiled of the value of that there is no encouragement.

63. You do admit that you look upon this railway as something which should be provided by the State for what you have done for the country?—No. I have said that my interests must not be considered for a moment. If I have not proved that the interests of the district warrant, and the interests of the Dominion warrant it, I have failed in my appeal.

64. But you have asked that this be done for you?—Not for a minute.

65. Now, you said in your evidence, "I have fought for over twenty years, and there are people who have owned much larger tracts of land in New Zealand who have never contributed anything to a railway?—I said "in the district."

66. What I want to know is whether you have contributed something in money or to the development of the district?—In money.

67. Then you said, "As you know, you can get as many signatures as you want by the expenditure of money." Does that mean paying for signatures?—Paying for canvassers. In the street you will often see people standing about getting signatures to a petition.

68. Then you said, "We are not petitioning for a new railway: we are asking you to recommend the resumption of the construction of a railway which has been authorized by Parliament and for which money has been voted by Parliament." Well, now, how much money has been voted by Parliament for this railway?—£75,000.

69. Has that been voted for the Rotorua-Reporoa line?—Yes, on account: it would not make the railway.

70. Did the 1922 Royal Commission fully consider the alternative of a road instead of a railway?—No, I cannot remember that. I do not think so.

71. I was not sure what you meant, but you say you do not know?—I do not think it considered a road.

72. You say, "We claim that the only way in which our railway can be opposed is by misrepresentation or ignorance"?—Yes.

73. You think there has been misrepresentation?—Yes, by a good many people in influential positions. Sir Joseph Ward came to Rotorua and said that upon this railway the traffic would amount to one train a week, or perhaps one train a fortnight. The finding of the Commission was that three trains a day would be required.

74. There will be some one to deal with the railway business later on. I want to find out what you meant. You said, "We can show that the whole of the land is useful, and that such of the land as may not be available for cultivation, amounting to perhaps 25 per cent., is the finest timber-growing country in the world." You say that the land which is not available for cultivation is the finest timber-growing country in the world?—Yes.

75. Have you anything to support that? Is that your own opinion?—Yes, and it has been stated in the Forestry Department's reports. I have seen the growth of trees there myself, and I have seen the reports of the Forestry Department.

76. That is your opinion given in evidence, but I wanted to know whether you have any document to put in to show that?—I could look through the Forestry Reports for you.

77. The State forests comprise 210,000 acres, you said?—Yes.

78. Within fifteen miles of the railway?—Yes.

79. And 140,000 acres are planted?—Yes.

80. Any you gave us all the other information about a number of private plantations, which goes to show that there is a vast area of plantations in close vicinity to the railway, a total of 300,000 acres?—Yes.

81. My point is that if there is 300,000 acres already planted along the railway, that would take away a considerable area of land which you would otherwise estimate as land available for close settlement: is that so?—That must be taken. The Commission found that 1,250,000 acres were affected by the railway. We had produced evidence to show it was 2,000,000 acres, but this area of 300,000 acres must be deducted.

82. You say that fourteen years' growth of timber will produce boards 14 by 1?—No, I said that the ground-plates and framing were out of *Eucalyptus globulus*—that is 4 by 2—and that the pine boards were 12 by 1. I also showed that that was not practicable in a plantation—those were trees grown outside in free growth.