

TUESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1929.

EDWARD EARLE VAILE further examined. (No. 9.)

1. *Mr. Makitanara.*] I think I commenced with the Mokai district in cross-examining you ?—Yes. I have been over there at times, but I have not been through the bushes there.

2. Then, the Wharepuhunga Block contains, say, 133,000 acres ?—I believe that is about it.

3. And the Pouakani Block 122,000 acres ?—Yes.

4. And the Tihoi Block 90,000 acres ?—Somewhere about that.

5. And the Waihaha Block 80,000 acres ?—Yes, that comes down to the lake.

6. At present there is a tramway owned by the Taupo Totara Timber Co., which runs within twelve miles of the lake ?—Yes.

7. So, roughly speaking, there are at present 425,000 acres in that locality—close on to half a million acres ?—Well, it all depends upon how far you go back. It depends upon how big you make the locality which you take in.

8. Do you suggest that that area of country would be better served by this railway than by that tram-line ?—That matter has been fully gone into, and I have endeavoured to show that the reports were that it was impossible to make the Taupo Totara Timber Co.'s line carry the heavy traffic at a less cost, and at present their concession is at such rates of freight that their railway is practically useless.

9. But supposing that that line was improved, would it suit better than this proposed line ?—I do not know that it would suit quite as well.

10. Would it not avoid the Mamaku ?—You would save that hill, but you would run into many others. The total climb is 3,600 ft., which is much more than the Mamaku Hill.

11. You are aware that the Commission has decided that that line would serve the purpose of that country better than this proposed railway ?—No, sir, I am not aware of that.

12. You know Mr. William Moon, of Taupo ?—Yes, I did know him. He is deceased now, but I did know him.

13. He was a farmer there ?—Yes.

14. This is what he said. He was asked by the Chairman, "If you owned all the timber in the area pointed out would you send it to Taupo and then to Rotorua by railway if constructed ?" And he replied, "Certainly not." What do you say to that ?—I say that Mr. Moon was a very interesting old gentleman, but he did not know anything about that. I can show to the Committee figures which will prove that the extra cost of taking timber over the Taupo Totara Timber Co.'s line would amount to nearly £1,000,000 sterling. It would pay for this railway and all the branches to it.

15. But they are using that line for the purpose at present ?—But only for small traffic. The cutting of the Taupo Totara Timber Co. is about 7 million feet a year.

16. Now we will take the land on the eastern side of the railway: that portion, I believe, covers quite a big area of timber country ?—The land reserved for afforestation is about 300,000 acres.

17. Any you have admitted that it will not come into profit for about twenty-five to thirty years ?—No, I have done nothing of the kind.

18. Well, as far as milling is concerned ?—I did not admit anything of the kind. The Forestry Department has previously given full evidence on that point, and their evidence is that by 1932, of sawn timber from that block there will be $7\frac{1}{2}$ million feet and 2,600 trucks of posts per annum, and rapidly increasing to 32 million feet of sawn timber per annum. What I said was that the trees planted to-day, in my judgment, would not be fit for milling within thirty years time, that the final crop would be used then, but the thinnings would be used long before that. But a portion of these forests was planted as far back as 1898.

19. Then, to say that the forests would be of no value for twenty-five or thirty years would be quite wrong—Quite wrong.

20. About pulp: is not this pulping talk like Mohammed's coffin—floating in space ?—No.

21. But are you not basing this pulping question on assumption ?—No, not at all.

22. Where is your machinery for it ?—The Government has sent timber from these plantations all the way to the United States for actual treatment, and the reports are favourable as to the possibility of the use of the timber for newsprint and other papers.

23. But I am coming to the actual thing: never mind about dreaming ?—Very well; but this is not dreaming.

24. Now, coming to Tokaanu: do you seriously suggest that the economic way of getting out the produce from Tokaanu would be through the route of the proposed line, instead of to the Main Trunk line ?—Yes, certainly.

25. Have you been through this country, from Tokaanu along the coast ?—Just along the road. I do not profess to know the country there.

26. Have you been through this country, up the valley, and on the road from Tokaanu to Waimarino ?—I have, and all over the range.

27. Did you notice any difference in the levels, between the two routes ?—I respectfully suggest that any one in his sane senses would not dream of taking the heavy freight across the road; they would take it across the lake in a boat.

28. And bullocks ?—The bullocks would go on that road; it is not nearly so bad as the Motu Road, which thousands of cattle come over.

29. Is that road similar to the road you are using now, the Rotorua-Taupo Road ?—No, it is not so good a road, and the bridges are narrower.

30. This is a better road ?—Yes.