

167. Are you aware that it would amount to over £1,000,000 sterling?—No, I have not gone into the figures, and I am not familiar with the bush on the Mokai line.

168. Evidence has been given before this Committee that the quantity available is 570 million feet, and the figure was 580 millions when given to the Commission: whichever is the figure, a saving of 2s. or 3s. would amount to a material consideration?—A very large sum indeed.

169. What is the Department's estimate of the ultimate yield of the planted forest per acre on a thirty-year rotation?—I cannot answer.

170. Can you give the figure on any rotation?—No. These are matters on which other witnesses from the Department would be more qualified to answer than I am.

171. Have you formed any conception of the quantity of timber which will be ultimately available?—Yes, I fully realize that the quantity is very large indeed.

172. Do you think that it would be more than equal to all the timber being cut in New Zealand to-day?—All the indigenous?

173. Taking all the mills that are working to-day, do you think they are turning out as much as this planted forest will turn out eventually?—I cannot answer without figures.

174. Have you considered the difference between the cost of road haulage and the cost of railway haulage?—Yes, it is very great.

175. What do you estimate to be the cost per 100 ft. for hauling timber for ten miles in motor-trucks?—I have actual figures for longer distances, over comparatively rough roads. R. Palmer and Sons are carting their timber from Waikare bush over the Rotorua-Taupo Road, going forty-six miles over the road and three miles into the bush.

176. It is more than that distance into the bush?—They have had the mill shifted. It is approximately forty-nine or fifty miles, and it was being carted a little while ago by contract for 5s. 6d. per 100 ft. The timber is being carted over a heavy road from Whakarara to Waipawa, a distance of forty-six miles, for 5s. per 100 ft.; and from Te Pohui to Hastings, a distance of forty miles, over hilly road, for 6s.; also from Puketitiri to Hastings, a distance of thirty-six and a half miles—a fairly large quantity of timber—at 6s. These rates are for loading one way only, in practically every case. The Otukotara Road, for haulage purposes, is much worse as regards grades than the Rotorua-Taupo Road—very much worse. Indeed, there is no comparison at all.

177. Taking these figures as a basis, what do you think it would cost to haul the timber thirty miles from Rotorua?—I could not take these figures as a basis at all.

178. Do you think the rate would be less than these figures?—Yes.

179. What do you think it would cost for thirty miles?—On the present roads?

180. Yes, on a good road?—It would cost, roughly, 3s. 6d. on the present road. On a good road the rate would be reduced enormously.

181. Let us take it at 3s. 6d. Do you know the railage from Rotorua to Auckland at present: the distance is 171 miles?—It is 5s. 4d.

182. What is the rate for the whole way—200 miles?—It is 5s. 9d.

183. Then by road and rail your total freight is 8s. 10d., and all the way by rail it is 5s. 9d., showing a saving of 3s. 1d. per 100 ft.: what would that saving amount to on the total yield of the plantation?—To an enormous sum. But it would not be done in that way.

184. Why not?—The road haulage would be reduced materially, because the timber would have to be hauled over a good road.

185. Is the road not good now?—Decidedly not. It is capable of great improvement.

186. But all we can go on is the actuality?—Yes, existing conditions.

187. It would mean a saving of 3s. 1d. per 100 ft.: that would pay for the railway every year?—No. Under existing conditions, yes.

188. You say that there is no timber accessible to Taupo: do you know Opawa bush?—I know it roughly.

189. Is it good bush?—There are areas of good bush there.

190. Could that be brought to Taupo?—It could be brought by water.

191. You say that on the edge of the Urewera there are large quantities of timber available?—Yes.

192. You are aware that the Kakahi timber is being cut?—At Te Whaiti.

193. Do you know where that timber is being delivered?—Yes; it is being delivered at Rotorua Station.

194. How many miles is it carted?—It is carted fifty-two miles.

195. If the railway were made to Waiotapu, do you think there would be a considerable saving?—Yes.

196. That is to say, there would be a saving on the native bush plantations in the Uruwera. Do you know the Pohokura bush?—Pohokura No. 3—I know it.

197. Do you think that all the saving on the haulage of timber, which you admit would be considerable, would pay for the railway to Rotorua?—If all the timber were hauled over the railway it would, but the timber in Pohokura No. 3 would never go over the railway.

198. Do you know the Heruiwi bush?—Yes.

199. Do you think it would be possible to take that over the railway?—Yes, but not the timber from the Pohokura bush No. 3. I say it is possible, but I do not say that it is practicable.

200. You know the survey route that the Department has made across the Kaingaroa Plains?—Yes.

201. Is it a practicable route for a railway?—Yes, but it has a grade against the load for fifteen miles.

202. What is the grade?—Another witness can give it.