

203. In regard to all this vast quantity of timber to be removed, your Department in the past has given most positive evidence that a railway is required?—A railway?

204. This railway?—Because it was the only one in sight.

205. Quite so; the others were in the air. With all this timber available, do you think that a very small charge, say 6d. per 100 ft., would pay for the railway?—Yes, if all the timber were brought over it I believe it might.

206. Do you still think that a railway is not justified?—As a timber proposition I do, because I do not think that the timber should go out over that particular route, in view of the extension of the Kaingaroa plantations in a direction not anticipated, which has slightly changed conditions there.

207. But the timber on which Captain Ellis and Mr. Goudie gave their evidence is still there and unaltered?—The position is altered to this extent, that the Pohokura timber could be taken out by road. The road service conditions have altered the position very much.

208. That is a small matter. Do you think that the planted timber would justify the railway?—I do not.

209. You differ from the heads of Departments?—The position has changed.

210. Has any of the timber upon which Captain Ellis and Mr. Goudie gave evidence been destroyed or removed?—No, it is still there.

211. The evidence was that there were 25,000 acres planted at the time of the inquiry?—Yes.

212. Now that there are 153,000 acres planted, does that make the position better or worse for the railway?—It does not alter the position very materially as regards this railway, for the reason I have stated—namely, that the planting has extended away from the railway into another valley. That can be seen at a glance by looking at the map.

213. For how many miles is the country level from the watershed of the Kaingaroa to the east?—Roughly, it would run three or four miles east of the watershed, and two or three miles west of the watershed on the Kaingaroa plantation.

214. *Mr. Lye.*] Have you heard all the evidence?—I was here yesterday.

215. Do you think that the available timber in the area under discussion is overestimated as far as quantities are concerned?—I do, to a certain extent.

216. The petitioner asked you about the timber on the Paeroa Block: do you consider the statement that there are 110 million feet is an exaggeration?—I do.

217. There is a wide discrepancy between the two estimates of 10 millions and 111 millions?—Yes.

218. You are quite satisfied that there are not 110 million feet available?—I am certain that there are not.

219. In regard to the Rangitaiki River, there is a natural fall of the bush lands towards that river?—There is, affecting a very considerable quantity of Native lands.

220. Is it feasible that the timber there could be floated down the river: is there sufficient water?—Are you referring to the indigenous-forest timbers?

221. Yes?—No, because a great deal of it is matai and rimu; totara also would be too heavy to float. As regards the timbers east of the Rangitaiki, road or tram access is the only way by which they can be got out.

222. In what direction?—The natural fall is towards the Bay of Plenty, down the Rangitaiki Valley. There are no engineering difficulties in the way of constructing a tram-line. In fact, there is already a tram-line constructed fifteen miles of the distance.

223. If there were a line south of the lake, would that be quite as good as the Rotorua-Taupo Railway line for the purpose of freighting out the timber and settling the land?—It would not affect the timber north of Lake Taupo, because the double handling—railage or freight, and handling again on the Tongariro Co's line, if it was constructed—would make it more profitable to extract the timber by the Taupo Totara Co's line or by road to Rotorua.

224. Taking the available sources of timber into consideration, do you consider they would warrant the building of the Rotorua-Taupo line at present?—Not at present. There are ample supplies of timber in the North Island in view in the Mamaku district. In the rather distant future the North Island supply will have to come from this region, either on the Taupo Totara Co's line or by road, or perhaps by the proposed railway, or by a route down the Rangitaiki.

225. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Vaile asked you whether you consider, if all these vast areas of timber mentioned by him were transported over the Rotorua-Taupo Railway, it might pay, and you said that it might: is the Committee to understand that you believe that these vast areas of timber would be likely to go over that railway?—I do not.

226. Therefore is your previous statement that the proposed Rotorua-Taupo Railway would not be justified for timber purposes in any way shaken by that particular statement?—No.

227. *Mr. Vaile.*] Are you aware that the Tongariro Timber Co's line is a private one?—Yes.

228. Are you aware of the terms of their concession? I suggest they are such as to make their line useless for the hauling of anybody else's timber?—I have a report in regard to the terms, but I could not answer offhand. I am familiar with the country.

229. Are they open to carry anybody's timber?—No.

JAMES BAIRD CAMPBELL examined. (No. 14.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am a sheep-farmer, residing at Havelock North.

2. I understand that you have volunteered to give some evidence to the Committee about the proposed railway from Rotorua to Taupo, the construction of which line has been stopped, and in regard to the completion of which Mr. Vaile and others have petitioned. Will you please make your