

eighteen miles on which there is no line, and that brings you to the northern part of our plantations. At Te Teko you strike the East Coast line. So in approximately from forty to fifty miles the timber would strike the East Coast line, which would carry it on to Tauranga. That is about all we can say at present.

8. *Mr. Lye.*] Some doubt has been raised as to the quantity of timber available in some of these areas. It has been stated that there is 110 million feet in the Paeroa bush. What is your estimate of the quantity of timber available there?—Ten millions. I think the “110” must have been a typist’s mistake. The typist must have struck the figure “1” twice. Ten million feet is the estimate.

9. Would you consider that there is a large amount of timber which would go over the Rotorua-Taupo line?—Native timber, you mean? I should say there is not. Except for the Paeroa Block there is hardly anything there.

10. You heard most of the evidence submitted to the Committee: are you of opinion that the quantities of native timber available to go over the line are exaggerated?—Yes.

11. With regard to the planted timbers, are there any large quantities available for milling at the present time?—Not on the Kaingaroa. If there were, it depends entirely upon the possible utilization by some pulp-mill.

12. But you say that if a pulping industry were established in New Zealand the probability is that the timber-supplies in the area would not travel over the Rotorua-Taupo line?—Most probably it would not.

13. *Mr. Vaile.*] What is your estimate of the yield per acre of your planted forest?—250 cubic feet per annum after twenty years. We know by actual measurement that our plantations run 5,000 cubic feet per acre.

14. Well, that is 60,000 superficial feet?—You cannot say that a young plantation contains any superficial feet.

15. This is from a speech by Captain Ellis: “Where else in the world are better wood yields obtained than here, where from 75,000 to 200,000 superficial feet per acre are secured for a thirty-year rotation of *Pinus insignis*?” Do you think Captain Ellis knew what he was talking about?—No.

16. The Forestry Department gave evidence before the 1922 Commission in these words: “The indigenous forests under the control of the State Forest Service which are contributory to the Rotorua-Taupo line are of a total area of 161,769 acres. Other forest areas, either Native or privately-owned, total 34,064 acres”?—It depends on what Captain Ellis took as contributory to the line. If he took in the Ureweras he was probably right. There is quite an argument as to whether the Ureweras will be contributory to the line or not.

17. Here is a further quotation: “The total estimated stand of timber of all these indigenous forests is close on 4,000 million feet”?—I say there is very little to go except the Paeroa Block.

18. You differ from that evidence by from 4,000 million feet to practically nothing?—Very much so. I believe that Captain Ellis must have had the country to the west of Lake Taupo and the Ureweras in his mind, otherwise it cannot be explained.

19. What is the value of the evidence of your Department if two years ago they said 4,000 million feet and to-day you say nothing?—That is my estimate.

20. *The Chairman.*] That is not a fair question. The witness cannot be asked to give an opinion as to the value of his Department’s estimate.

21. What do you estimate to be the cost of moving timber on a good road, with lorries, at per 100 ft.?—I could not give you that. I have had no experience.

22. *The Chairman.*] From what you have said about the cubic quantity of timber, I gathered that whilst you have that cubic content you have no timber available for sawing?—No.

23. When will you be likely to have it?—We expect to have it after forty years.

24. How long from now?—Nearly thirty years from now.

TUESDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 1929.

PHILIP GEORGE ROUSSELL examined (No. 17.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position, Mr. Roussel?—I am Superintendent of Transport to the Railway Department, and I represent the Department before the Committee. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I would like to place before the Committee information dealing with this question purely from the point of view of present-day railway-operating costs, and in that connection I would like to refer to the 1922 Commission and its findings. That Commission in 1922 estimated the cost of constructing the railway at £700,000, the cost of railway rolling-stock was estimated at £50,000, and the rate of interest was computed at 4 per cent., making an interest bill of £30,000 per annum. The estimated train-mileage per annum was 103,290 miles, and the cost per train-mile excluding interest was 10s. 2d., and including interest 15s. 11½d. per train-mile. The estimated revenue was £61,492 per annum; the total operating-cost excluding interest was £52,547 per annum; the total operating cost including interest was £82,547 per annum. The annual loss including interest was set down by the Commission at £21,055, equal to £386 per mile per annum. The interest charge per train-mile was set down at 5s. 9½d. I have been very carefully through these figures in order to find the present-day costs, and I make a very much bigger annual loss than the Commission did. The Public Works Department at the present day estimates the cost of the construction of the railway to be £800,000—that is, £100,000 more than the estimate of 1922. My estimate of the cost of equipping the line with rolling-stock is £65,000, as against £50,000 estimated by the Commission. That is a