

country which did not attempt to take away traffic from my company's line. That is what I have always done. I have never opposed Mr. Vaile's line, except to the extent of giving evidence to show that the traffic of our district was not available for it.

168. Did you ever support it?—No.

169. Well, you gave evidence in 1922?—Yes.

170. You still stick to that evidence?—Yes. It is the same evidence that I have given this morning. My attitude has never changed.

171. You are still of opinion that the main line should be the Rotorua-Taupo line?—If there is to be a Government standard line.

172. You want all the interests in the district to come together with a view to arriving at a solution?—That is so. There are seven Government Departments interested in the district, and you cannot go to any one of them and get the Government policy. We prepared a statement of the history and circumstances of this country, and we say to the Prime Minister, "Get an officer of your Department—we suggest his own Department, because the Prime Minister's Department can go to every Department and collect facts. We suggest that he should collect and co-ordinate the facts relating to the whole district, and that then the people of the district should get together, and have all the information before them, and let us arrive at a businesslike arrangement.

173. You are not going back on the evidence of 1922?—I have never given evidence as an engineer. I have said that my impression from all the circumstances was that Mr. Holmes's report was based on sound lines.

174. You have already said that in the meantime you are protecting your own interests?—Yes.

175. You have handled a lot of this country, I understand—the country adjacent to your own line. Is it rough, hilly country?—There are hills, but there is a great deal of flat. The last twenty odd miles are plains.

176. Are you farming it?—No. That is where Tokoroa and Campbelltown are. We are farming only our own bush—the bush we are cutting out, not the open country.

177. Farming with what success?—Not with great success so far, but we have not tackled it properly. We have not been able to get a manager who can handle it successfully. We are prepared to put up the capital, but so far we have not been able to do it. But this is not a good time, as you know, for people going into the back country.

178. Why will they not go into the back country?—I do not know what is in their minds, but there has been a lot of talk about bush sickness, and about a great many settlers having to get their valuations reduced. It may be that: I do not know.

179. What varieties of grass do you sow on your country?—I do not know, but I could get the information by wire if the Committee desires it.

180. *Mr. Samuel.* Are you against the Rotorua-Taupo Railway?—I have spent the last half-hour in trying to explain my position. We have never opposed it.

181. I want an answer, "Yes," or "No"?—"Yes" or "No" would not answer it.

182. Well, are you in favour of it?—"Yes" or "No" does not answer that.

183. Do you think a railway from Rotorua to Taupo would be necessary to open up a land-settlement scheme there?—It all depends upon what capital you have available—whether you have sufficient capital to develop the country up to the state at which it will pay.

184. If a policy were decided upon to make available sufficient capital to develop a million acres of land, then the railway, in your opinion, would pay?—I should think so.

185. Then, may I ask again whether you are against the railway that has been started and stopped?—Again the question of what one's view is depends upon what one does. When that railway was started I was urged to oppose it, and I declined to do so.

186. You have told us in your evidence that you did not oppose it?—We did not.

187. As a matter of fact, I think your company sent out a circular stating that you were in favour of it?—No.

188. I recently got a circular letter from you stating that you were not against the railway?—You mean the other day. I state that we have never opposed it. I explained the facts that I have put to you here.

189. I took it from that that you were not antagonistic to the railway?—I do not regard it as our business.

190. That is exactly what I wanted to get at. That being so, I ask why you are giving evidence before this Committee?—Because Mr. Vaile has given evidence.

191. On whose behalf were you called?—That of my company.

192. You were not called by Mr. Vaile?—No.

193. Nor by the Government?—No.

194. You volunteered?—Mr. Vaile has given evidence that the traffic of the district served by my company's railway could be more profitably taken to the Rotorua-Taupo line. He is building his appeal to you on the assumption that that traffic will be available to his railway. I take it that you want to know the facts. The evidence I am giving is that the traffic of my district will not be available to the Rotorua-Taupo line.

195. It is served by your own little railway?—Yes; but why call it a "little railway"? It is fifty-two miles in length.

196. It is fifty-two miles, but it is really a long railway?—It is equivalent to the early Government standard.

197. You have a fairly wide knowledge of the Taupo lands?—Yes. It has been my business to find out.

198. I do not mean on the Mokai side, but on the other side?—All round the lake.