

## REPORT.

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To His Excellency the Right Honourable John Poynder Dickson-Poynder,  
Baron Islington, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His  
Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Commissioners appointed by Your Excellency to inquire into the several matters and things mentioned and referred to in the commission, a copy of which is attached hereto, have the honour to report as follows:—

Every effort has been made by us to carry out in an efficient manner the duties intrusted to us.

Wherever evidence was offered we held sittings, and heard same; and, owing to the importance of our inquiry, we admitted the Press to such proceedings. Where possible we advertised our proposed sittings. All evidence was taken on oath and the witnesses were voluntary. We consider that on the whole we received very representative evidence, and we feel that such evidence has been of great assistance to us in the forming of our opinion. We also desire to mention that throughout we found the people in the localities visited most willing to assist us in the furtherance of our inquiry.

Your Commission has travelled over seven hundred miles (some of the distance having been covered on foot and some on horseback) and held eighteen meetings, at which sixty-eight witnesses were heard. The first meeting of the Commission was held on the 10th day of April, and the last at which evidence was taken on the 8th day of May. Both these meetings were held at Auckland.

We have made a thorough personal inspection of the land through which the several railway routes under consideration pass, and also of the land in other districts commercially affected. We visited Whangarei, Kawakawa, Opuā, Russell, Ohāeawai, Kaikohe, Okaihau, Rawene, Manganuka, Victoria Valley, Kaitaia, Broadwood, Kohukohu, Taheke, Tutamoe, Kaihu, Dargaville, Kirikopuni, Houto, Parakao, Nukutawhiti, Titoki, Poroti, Whatitiri, Maungakaramēa, Waikiekie, and McCarroll's Gap. We thus had the opportunity of inspecting the lands in the far north to be brought into touch with railway communication, and of practically traversing the entire length of the proposed Main Trunk route, especially its eastern and western courses along the Tangihua Range. From our own observations, and from evidence brought before us, we are firmly of the opinion that the excellence of the land, enhanced by a most favourable climate, fully justifies the immediate construction of the Trunk Railway through the peninsula, with the object of opening out and developing the lands of the north; and it is considered that such railway would be a paying proposition.

Although the personal observations of the Commission support the evidence, it has occurred to us that it would strengthen the position if we made some comparisons with the existing railways.

To begin with, we would compare the conditions in the Wanganui - New Plymouth and the Waikato districts of the North Island with those in the districts affected by the North of Auckland Main Trunk Railway—McCarroll's Gap northward. In both the former the land is of a light loamy or sandy character, with an abundant rainfall; the principal products are butter, wool, and beef; there is but little agriculture; there are practically no manufacturing industries; and the timber business is a decreasing quantity.

On the Wanganui - New Plymouth coast in a distance of 110 to 120 miles there are five ports available for steamers and sailing-ships—namely, Waitara, New Plymouth, Opunake, Patea, and Wanganui. The land, although good, is only a narrow strip—say, twelve to fifteen miles wide; following the sea-coast, and about 1,000,000 acres in extent. The railway runs fairly well through the centre of it, rather more to the west than to the east. The butter, wool, and cheese is mainly