

45. For the Kaikohe district, would not Russell be much more advantageously situated as regards the establishment of such works?—For Kaikohe, Hokianga, and the north.

46. And if Mangakahia were connected with Kaikohe by rail, for that district also?—If the freezing-works were at the Bay of Islands I should say that, owing to the better harbour facilities, there would be a better prospect of their being a success at the Bay of Islands than at Whangarei. There would also, by the connection you have mentioned, be a better means of conveying stock to Russell or Opua as a centre than to Whangarei.

47. You would agree with the statement that, owing to the bar at the Kaipara, the ports of this peninsula must be on the east?—Certainly. Our facilities for treating our harbour as a means of import and export are very much inferior to those on the east.

48. On what account?—First, on account of the bar, which, although deep, is a very uncertain one; and secondly, on account of the long distance stock have to go by water before reaching their market.

49. In reference to the proposed Dargaville-Kaihu connection, you advocate a connection between Kirikopuni and Dargaville: what land would that open up?—Five miles of Native land, poor in quality; another four miles of comparatively small holdings: the balance partly through the Maungaru Estate and partly through small settlements.

50. All of which lies on the river-bank?—Yes.

51. Do you not think the connection from Taita to Mangakahia would open up and develop the country to a larger extent?—It precisely brings about one of the conditions I have mentioned—viz., that it is impossible to foretell the future. If you establish freezing-works at the Bay of Islands, undoubtedly the line would be in the proper place if connection were made with Mangakahia or with the Kaihu-Dargaville line. If the development of the country takes place in other directions the objective might be difficult to arrive at.

52. If the objective is to reach the nearest and best port, would not the link be better from Taita towards Mangakahia?—Under the circumstances stated, the Bay of Islands would be the nearest and best port, but that is a question which I think ought to be left until further development takes place.

53. What is the nature of the country between Taita and Mangakahia?—A lot of it is good stock country, some is rich limestone, and a small portion, comparatively, is poor gumfields.

54. *Mr. Steadman.*] You refer to Mangapai and a connection with that place for the Main Trunk line at the east coast?—It would have no connection with what I call the Trunk route.

55. Is not that some distance from the coast?—I do not know how far it is from the mouth of Whangarei Harbour.

56. It is twenty-eight miles. How are the people from Waipu going to be served by such a line?—They are within easy distance of a road which gives them access to the line near to McCarroll's Gap; but I think it is unnecessary to debate that question now, as affecting the Waipu district.

57. Waipu is on the route, and therefore those people are interested in the matter?—No, because the access for people in the neighbourhood of Tokatoka will be by the railway and Tokatoka-Mangapai or neighbouring roads, whereas the access from Waipu will be to a point to the south.

58. Do you know the country in that locality?—Fairly well.

59. Do you know there is a range of hills that they cannot get through between Waipu and McCarroll's?—I think there is a road which would take them to the Gap.

60. Is not the only road Carr's Road—the outlet from Waipu towards Whangarei for the people of Waipu to take to get to the Main Trunk?—They can go to Whangarei, but their real point of access to the line will be in the neighbourhood of McCarroll's Gap.

61. By what road?—I do not know the name of the road.

62. Both are very arduous and difficult roads to get at?—That is my belief.

63. You think those people should not be considered at all?—I do not say so, but I do not think that this question of east or west as regards the Waipu district has any material bearing on the main question.

64. On what do you base your opinion?—I know the country sufficiently well to form that opinion.

65. What knowledge have you?—I have what I consider a sufficient knowledge of that part of the country to arrive at the definite conclusion that the proper outlet for the Waipu district is in the neighbourhood of McCarroll's Gap.

66. What are the definite facts that bring you to that conclusion?—I have no information to give you.

67. You mention coal: where have the seams been found in the Mangakahia?—One between Avoca Settlement and the Karaka Block, on the road from Tangowahine to Mangakahia, on land held by a Crown tenant.

68. How far from the nearest water?—Eight or nine miles, and about the same distance from the nearest railway. There is a very easy road between it and the central route by the Tangohine Valley.

69. Where would it strike?—At Parakao.

70. Where else does coal crop out?—Within about four miles, in a straight line from the railway at the head of Tangowahine Valley.

71. Where is copper found?—In the Houto Mountain, and also in the Mangakahia Gorge, beyond the junction of the two routes.

72. You also mentioned manganese: do you know it is practically unsaleable at present?—I believe so.

73. No one would work that?—You cannot foretell the future.