

3. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] When you speak of the Kirikopuni, you mean by good-sized boats?—By sea-going steamers.
4. That same meaning cannot be attached to any navigation above Tangiteroria?—It cannot apply to anything above the junction.
5. You are a member of the County Council, and represent Marsden and Kaipara on the Hospital Board?—Yes.
6. In that latter capacity you frequently travel from Wairoa to Whangarei?—Yes.
7. In speaking of the flooding of the rivers you speak from personal observation?—I do.
8. As a member of the County Council you interview the settlers?—We went to the extreme boundary of the Hobson County, just on the eastern spurs of the Tangihua Range. It took us two or three hours to ride back to Tangiteroria.
9. The freight to these settlers, you say, was £1 15s. to Tangiteroria, and then, I suppose, there was cartage?—Yes.
10. Did they give you any idea of the cost of carting their goods from Mangapai to their homesteads?—It costs them £1 per ton to get it in. That would be materially reduced with a decent road.
11. *Mr. Steadman.*] This Tangihua Stream that you refer to has steep banks, has it not?—Yes.
12. Do you know it has been bridged?—Yes, it is now.
13. What length of bridge would be required?—Not a big one. The county had £300 to build the bridge and approaches.
14. What did the approaches cost?—I cannot say from memory. It may have been £150.
15. The Waitotama is another narrow creek?—Yes.
16. Do you know that the Mangakahia Valley, where the bridge is, widens out?—I do not think the valley widens out at the bridge.
17. Does not the river at that place turn very sharply?—I do not know that it turns any more sharply than at any other part. The river is all angles.
18. When you stand on the bridge does not the other side of the bridge turn right in, thus causing the river to rise very rapidly?—It rises very rapidly. The river turns down to the junction. When Mr. Harding and I were there the two rivers were not perceptible except by the willows. We took the launch over the roadways.
19. What is the depth of the Mangakahia?—When it is low you can wade over; in flood time it is bank to bank wide, and over the bridge.
20. Is that where the railway crosses?—I do not know.
21. *Mr. Becroft.*] You made the statement that the settlers on the river for ten miles below the western crossing would use the railway: for what reason do you limit to ten miles?—I just gave that as an estimate. If I lived at Tangowahine and the railway crossed at Omano, I would go by the railway if I desired to go to Auckland.
22. You would not go that way from where you are now?—No; it would be too far away to affect us at all.
23. You have resided in this district a long time?—Yes.
24. Would you corroborate Mr. Harding about the enormous tract of good land?—I believe from my knowledge that there are large tracts of good land to the west of the Tangihuas which have not been developed, because of the want of communication.

FREDERICK WILLIAM PEDDLE examined. (No. 27.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a farmer, residing at Hohanga, about five miles up the Wairoa from Dargaville.
2. Will you kindly make a statement to the Commission on the subject-matter of our inquiry?—Owing to Auckland's present large population and natural position, it must be for all time the port for the northern peninsula. Ocean-going ships are constantly being built larger, as they pay best, and the increasing tendency is to send them only to the large distributing centres, where they can obtain the greatest amount of freight. For this reason the lines of railway should be through the centre of the peninsula, leading direct to Auckland, where we can get quick despatch for perishable goods to the markets of the world. The northern peninsula's pastoral products will probably for all time consist of such perishable goods as meats, fruits, and dairy-produce. The City of Auckland at present is our best market for all fat stock during eight months of each year, and as the city's population is likely to grow as fast as our products in quantity, it will continue to be our best market. For this reason quick and cheap transit by rail for our fat stock to Auckland is necessary. Owing principally to loss by shipping stock by Wairoa to Auckland, at present the small farmer has no chance of obtaining the full benefit of his industry, as the steamers will only take full loads of stock, thus forcing the farmer to often sacrifice his stock to the dealers, instead of being able to send consignments by the railway to the Auckland market or to the freezing-chambers for export. It frequently occurs that barges and steamers are delayed during transit by rough weather, causing intense suffering to the stock and consequent loss to the owners. It sometimes happens that whole punt-loads of cattle are capsized into the sea, with the loss of a number of animals, and the balance so knocked about as to be rendered unfit for sale for months afterwards. The unloading from barge and steamer causes further loss and injury to the stock. It entails the necessity of the farmer or his agent going with the stock, and consequent loss of time, to take care of them, and unship and entrain them at Helensville. It usually takes two days for our stock to arrive in Auckland after leaving the farm in Wairoa by steamer and rail, whereas by train they could be entrained in the morning and sold or slaughtered in the afternoon in Auckland. By putting the railway on the western side of the Tangihua Range,