

15. And that at a certain point on that road a branch line of two or three miles is being put in to give immediate access to the Hokianga?—Yes.

16. Then, you agree that the extension from Kaikohe to Hokianga as laid off is not going to interfere with the further extension to Mangamuka?—No, it will not interfere with it, but the more direct route I spoke in favour of would open up Ōkaihō, and would have a level road in from Ohāeawai.

17. Do you not know that the engineers are endeavouring to ascertain the best line possible to Rangiahua?—Yes.

18. Whatever line they adopt will be just as good for those places you have mentioned as the line you are speaking of?—Yes, it must go by the best line.

DAN SAVIDENT examined. (No. 31.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am Harbourmaster of Kaipara Harbour. I reside at Te Kopuru. I have been five years Harbourmaster, and twenty-three years trading in and out of the harbour.

2. *Mr. Stallworthy.*] Supposing a railway-bridge were placed over the Wairoa River at Kirikopuni, would it interfere with the steamer traffic?—At what height above high water would it have to be placed not to interfere with the traffic?—25 ft. to 30 ft. would be ample for the present navigation that is going up there.

3. And for the future?—For the future I cannot say, but large vessels will not be able to get up there. It will be only small vessels that will proceed as far as that, because the width of the river is not sufficient for large vessels.

4. *Mr. Coom.*] What tonnage do you call small vessels?—Vessels carrying say, 300 tons, not more, could get up there.

5. In reference to the bar at the harbour, what size of vessels come into the Wairoa?—The biggest vessel I have taken up the Wairoa was the "Waihora," of the Union Steamship Company, which carries 8,000 tons. The "Waihora," fully loaded, would not go up further than Beacon Point.

6. A vessel drawing 26 ft. could go to the Beacon Point?—Yes.

7. How far is that from Dargaville?—Twenty miles, or a little over.

8. It will be possible in the future to load vessels of 8,000 tons in the harbour?—Yes, but it will be regulated by the draught, of course. The draught of a vessel depends on her width.

9. With the increasing size of vessels there will be a corresponding increase in draught?—I do not think so. It is all according to what trade the vessel is built for.

10. Is there anything to prevent the development of a direct trade from the Kaipara homewards or to Australia in the future?—Not so far as the port is concerned, because we have got a fairly good depth of water on the bar; seeing that there are about 36 ft. of water on the bar. I may explain that the vessels would have to do the same as they do in other ports—they may have to wait outside for fine weather, as is the case in any bar harbour in the world.

11. Is the bar generally workable?—Small vessels may stay a day or two, but it would be a very rare occasion on which a large vessel would have to stay in the harbour because of the state of the bar. I have been on all sorts of sailing-ships coming in, but I have never seen the bar in such a state that the vessel could not get into the harbour. Some years ago a very large vessel was at the port, called the "Largo Law," and that vessel had to remain one day inside.

12. *Mr. Ronayne.*] Is it true that vessels trading to the Kaipara pay an increased insurance rate as compared with other ports?—I think they do whenever they cross the bar in any part of New Zealand, or almost any part of the world.

13. What is the maximum depth of water available for a vessel coming to the Dargaville wharf?—We take vessels drawing 18 ft. 6 in. to Dargaville.

14. *Mr. Steadman.*] What is the shallowest place in the river from Dargaville to Kirikopuni?—6 ft. 6 in. at low water.

15. Is it an extensive patch?—Yes, about a mile from Dargaville. I do not think you would find more than that at spring tides, and there is also a patch at Wallace, near Tangowahine, with same water.

16. What is the rise and fall of the tide?—We average it at 10 ft. We had one vessel loaded to 17 ft. at Tangowahine.

17. Do you know that in England they are building motor-lighters to compete with the railways?—I know that when I was trading along those parts they had lighters there that could carry as much as 1,500 tons.

THOMAS BASSETT examined. (No. 32.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am a farmer, and resident at Te Kopuru.

2. You know the scope of this Commission: would you like to make a statement as to the matters we are inquiring into?—I have been especially asked to give evidence as to how this matter will affect the dairying industry, which I am connected with, being chairman of the Northern Wairoa Dairy Company. I have been thirty-five years in the district. With regard to the railway route, my opinion is that the central route is the correct one. I do not pretend to know anything about the country, as I have not been over it, or beyond a line north of the northern junction of the two proposed routes. I omit from my statement any reference to the Bay of Islands County. There is a large tract of country between Kirikopuni and McCarroll's Gap—between the Tangihuas and the Wairoa—that cannot be utilized under present conditions for dairying, because it is impossible to get cream to the factory. If the line went through the Mangonui Valley it would