

likely to cause any serious obstruction to traffic upon the line?—No, certainly not, on a railway line. In America and England there are railways running through country where there is more snow to contend with.

693. If an ordinary open line were constructed with due care, and the deep gullies bridged, are you of opinion that the line would be obstructed by the snow-storm of an ordinary winter?—No.

694. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the position of the present station at Tarndale?—I have not been there for some years. It changed hands since I was in Tarndale. I believe the station is now several miles further south than it was when I lived there. The present station is about four miles from Fish Lake.

695. If any one were to state that the snow lies as high as the tops of the fences, for three months of the year, on Tarndale Plains, would that statement be incorrect?—I have never seen it. My experience only extends for a period of six or seven years. During that time, with the exception of one year, I found it more profitable to muster my cattle in the winter, and take them north and south, than at any other time of the year. The snow never lay more than three or four days on the flat. I never saw the snow on the top of the middle rail of a three-rail fence.

696. *Mr. Thomson.*] You say you have seen oats grow six feet high?—Yes, at the Rainbow, eight miles lower down.

697. Would they grow equally high at the Tarndale Station?—Judging from the few experiments I made with the English grasses, I should say they would.

698. What extent of run had you?—I had about 37,000 acres.

699. What extent was the Tarndale Run?—I do not know the extent; it was a very large area of land. The Tarndale Station was held under several applications.

700. The present Tarndale Station, and your station, would be 87,000 acres in extent?—I should say that would be the area.

701. You say that area would be fit for agricultural settlement?—A great portion of it, on the flats. The Sedgmore Flat, and all the level land, would be available.

702. Would it be as fit for settlement as the land on the Waimea Plains?—It would not be farmed under such favourable conditions.

703. Would a farmer be content with fifty acres?—That would depend very much upon his wants. A poor man, coming from England to better his condition, with fifty acres of land, and a few weeks' work, would vastly improve his position. Of course he would not make a fortune out of fifty or a hundred acres.

704. I presume there are many Nelson farmers who are content with fifty acres on the Waimea Plain?—I do not say they are content, but they do with it.

705. Would they equally do with it at Tarndale?—No.

706. How many more acres would they require to be comfortable?—It would not be worth more than half as much. I would rather live at a low altitude than in a mountainous country.

707. How many acres of the 87,000 acres would be suitable for small farmers?—A great quantity of it. The farmers would seek sheltered nooks, and settle down.

708. Could a farmer exist on twenty-five acres?—He would grow sufficient vegetables on half an acre. He would require to get occasional work during the year.

709. Is it not a fact that all that country is now open to the public for sale?—I do not know.

710. Is it closed from sale?—I do not know that it is. What would prevent them from purchasing is its present inaccessibility.

711. Is there a good coach road from Tarndale down to Hanmer?—I do not know.

712. How is it that there is no settlement there?—I think most people are ignorant of the existence of a coach road. I was not aware that it had advanced so far in civilization as to have a coach road up to Tarndale.

713. Seeing that there is a coach road, why is it not settled?—There are not sufficient public works going on to induce people to go there and settle. The towns and villages absorb the present labour.

714. There is not sufficient inducement for labourers or farmers to go up there?—No.

715. Would the existence of a railway make it different?—I believe a railway would make all the difference between its being tolerably well peopled and its present desolate condition.

716. I suppose you think it is necessary to have a railway in order to induce people to go there?—I think so.

717. Do you know any districts in the Middle Island that are thickly populated without a railway?—I do not know.

718. Is the soil on the Tarndale Run as good as on the Waimea Plain?—I would not say acre for acre.

719. How many acres?—The most of the land on the flats appeared to be of the most fertile description.

720. What is the acreage on the flats?—I do not know. There are many thousands of acres.

721. What is the width of the flat at the Rainbow?—It is very narrow; it runs a long way up.

722. How many hundred feet wide is the valley?—It would not be more than ten chains.

723. Is the ground steep on each side of the Rainbow?—Very steep.

724. Could they cultivate upon those steep?—No.

725. Do you know the altitude of the mountains behind—Mount Franklin for instance?—I do not know.

726. Would you think it 10,000 feet high?—I would think so if you told me.

727. You say the land in the Alma Valley is excellent?—It is excellent.

728. Do you know the altitude?—I believe it is 4,000 feet.

729. What extent of agricultural population would the 87,000 acres carry, if the land were opened by a railway?—It would carry a very considerable population. You would be surprised to see the area of land in some of the valleys that run from the main road. I used to go to such places for our fattest cattle, because there was the best land and grass.