

36. In order to give the Committee some idea as to the amount of lands held by Messrs. Campbell and Sons, could you give, approximately, the acreage held by yourself in pastoral leases?—Somewhere about twenty thousand acres.

37. That is in your own name?—Yes. I see there is a long list of runs here in my name, but the acreages are small. They consist of one run, which is cut up into subdivisions.

38. Do you hold any pastoral lands in conjunction with other persons?—No.

39. All your lands are held in your own name?—Yes.

40. Do you act as attorney or agent for Messrs. Campbell and Sons?—Yes; I act as attorney in some matters, and in station management. I am general manager of their business.

41. Do you also hold a power of attorney for Charles Clifford?—Yes.

42. And do you act in the same way for him?—Yes.

43. Do you also act for Walter Clifford?—Yes; I hold a power of attorney from both of these gentlemen.

44. Now, could you tell us roughly, from your knowledge of the company's affairs, the sheep-carrying capacity of these 388,788 acres?—Well, it is rather a difficult question to answer. There is a large amount of freehold land owned by the company, which carries a large proportion of the stock. In the winter a large portion of the sheep are on the low country, and a great deal of this high country (that alluded to by the questioner) is not utilized at all.

45. But can you not state generally what is the carrying capacity of the leasehold land?—It is very difficult to tell the carrying capacity of the land when you are simply using it as summer country, and have practically no stock on it in the winter. One half of the year much of it carries no sheep at all.

46. You usually work it with the freehold property?—Yes. I should say roughly that it would carry about one sheep to three or three and a half acres—that is, the high country held by Messrs. Campbell and Sons.

47. Then, do you know of your own knowledge whether the lands are now carrying, and have been for the past year, the full number of their carrying capacity?—The lands have been worked to the utmost extent of their carrying capacity always.

48. Then the number of sheep shown in the sheep returns would show the real carrying capacity of the lands?—Yes; but there are no returns which discriminate between freehold and leasehold.

49. It is given in the return for 1883 as 288,254 sheep; and for 1884, 289,247 sheep. This, you say, embraces the total number of sheep on freehold and leasehold lands?—Yes.

50. And you cannot tell the Committee the number of sheep carried on the lands held on lease?—Well, as I tell you, for a large portion of the year there are no sheep carried on parts of the leasehold. It is impossible to give any direct evidence in a case like this, where you have to work the leasehold with freehold, and move the sheep from one to the other. And it is impossible to say how many sheep the pastoral country would carry by itself.

51. Well, you can form a pretty good estimate, could you not, of what freehold lands you have got. Taking a rough survey of the blocks, you can say roughly the amount of sheep to the acre?—Well, I can say this: that the hilly country worked by itself would not carry anything like the stock that it would if worked with the low country.

52. And it would carry about a sheep to three or three and a half acres?—Yes; that is a high estimate. But you cannot be sure about that, because, if there is a severe winter the high country will not carry anything like what it would if the winter was mild.

53. What quantity of the land is freehold and what leasehold, as contained in First Schedule?—This is all leasehold, I think.

54. The 388,788 acres is all leasehold?—Yes.

55. And do you include in your estimate of a sheep to three acres the whole of that land?—It is a rough estimate. Probably, in some years the land would not carry a sheep to five acres.

56. What do you say is the amount of land held by yourself?—About twenty or twenty-three thousand acres.

57. And at what do you estimate the sheep-carrying capacity of it?—About six or seven thousand.

58. Sheep?—Yes.

59. How many sheep have you on it?—Well, that is on this and other country. There are very few sheep on it now—probably seven or eight thousand.

60. Are the sheep on it your own?—No.

61. Who do they belong to?—To Messrs. Robert Campbell and Sons. I may explain, with regard to this land, that it was a piece of land adjoining the Galloway Run, leased in 1883. The Government decided not to sell the lease of it in 1882. The country is very rabbit, and the lease of that country was not sold and was not occupied. We were threatened with an inundation of rabbits from it; and it was of no use, while this land was unoccupied, trying to keep down the rabbits on the adjoining country; so Messrs. Campbell and Sons got permission to use it for the year simply for keeping the rabbits upon it down. At the end of that year the lease was put up to auction.

62. By whom?—By the Government. There were no buyers. I attended the sale, and I bought the country in my own name, because I thought I could make it pay, and in order to prevent what would otherwise have happened, and been a great evil to the surrounding country, in the shape of rabbits. I bought it, and since then I have made a temporary arrangement with Messrs. Campbell and Sons to pay me for it for grazing sheep.

63. You refer to the whole country?—This twenty thousand acres, yes. Had I not bought it, it would have been unoccupied.

64. What rent do you pay for it?—Well, between £500 and £600.