

46. The country which runs through to Mokai—is not a great portion of that simply tussock country?—No; I do not suppose there is one-fourth of it tussock country

47. What size of section do you think would be necessary to enable a man to keep himself and his family?—It would vary from 300 acres to 800 or 900 acres; or you might extend it to 1,000 acres on the poorer country, or perhaps more broken country

48. What working capital would a man require for tackling that country?—I think he would want from £600 to £700.

49. You think it is no good a man tackling a country like this unless he has £600 to £700?—There have been men tackling the country with only a ten-pound note, but they have to struggle under great difficulties, working a couple of days on the farm and four days off it.

50. This land you took up at 15s. an acre increase to £5: what gave the increased value to that land?—Mainly showing the public what the ground would actually produce.

51. As the result of working the ground?—Yes, working it in a systematic way

52. Do you think it would benefit the State to take over this railway with a view to making it carry passengers and traffic?—Most decidedly. From a farmer's point of view in that locality it is absolutely necessary, because it is blocking the progress of the whole country. It is producing rabbits, which we have to poison.

53. You stated that thirty-four cows produced milk to the value of £13 to the cow?—Yes, that is the actual result. It includes the calves.

54. That is an exceptional case: what is the average?—I think I can safely say from £10 to £12 a cow

55. *Mr Wilson.*] Taking this raw country, what do you say it will cost to bring it into cultivation to produce £13 a cow?—I am not an expert, but can give you my experience as a practical farmer. I think after the second grassing most of this country will be able to graze a cow to produce that amount, or thereabouts. In the first place, some people put it into grass at the first going off. It is considered essential to cater for your cattle by growing turnips. It is the second ploughing that will produce the results I spoke of.

56. Take a piece of raw country such as we are dealing with, what do you say it will cost to bring it into such a condition as to return £10 or £13 a cow? Have you ever gone into that?—I think practically it will cost about the same as other country, because you always get a fair return.

57. You might not get any at all?—I do not agree with you there. I never saw any farm where you did not get some return.

58. Do you think it is better than or as good as any part of the Waikato country, or Te Awamutu?—Taking the worst country there, I think this is quite equal to it.

59. What will it cost you to bring land into cultivation to produce that amount of money you spoke of?—The cost of it is pretty well the figures I gave. The first ploughing will give you a fair living. If it costs you £1 15s. in the first place and you have to do it twice it would cost £2 10s. I will, roughly, say about £4 to bring it into full carrying-capacity.

60. What would be the carrying-capacity in both sheep and cattle?—To be on the safe side I will say a sheep and a quarter.

61. And a cow?—I should say about 3 or 4 acres to the cow

62. What is the percentage of cows to sheep?—I think it is 3; 5, I understand, to horses; and 3 to sheep. I am not an expert.

63. But you are a farmer?—Yes.

64. Of how many years' experience?—Twenty years, more or less.

65. You say that when you have got this country into that position you will be able to run a cow to 3 acres?—From 3 to 5 acres. I will say 5 acres to a cow

66. Would you be surprised to learn that it would take 10 acres to a cow on your own figures? Take your own place?—If you are referring to the 300 acres at Waotu, I have not had it all in grass.

67. How many horses have you in your team?—Three horses.

68. Heavy draught?—Medium. I worked four and have worked three. If the hill is steep I use three, and if very steep four

69. Are the prices you gave us contractors' prices?—I think that is the contractors' price.

70. Do you ever contract?—No.

71. Could you get me a contractor if I added 10s. to your price?—Probably there is a witness who will give evidence who is a contractor

72. You say you put 3 tons of manure in to the acre?—No, 3 cwt.

73. How often do you put that on?—It varies from 2½ cwt. to 3 cwt. about every third year I give it a top-dressing of basic slag

74. Is it not usual in the Waikato, in the poorer countries, to break it in, plough it, and put it in clover, about 2½ cwt.? You say in this country you can do it in two years, although you admit that the Waikato country is better?—You put your grass in, and that may carry you on for four years. It is a matter of opinion. You use clover, and I put in rye with clover, because rye will give you an immediate result. In three months you can get a reasonable amount of feed off rye. If you put in clover in the autumn you will not be able to feed it off before November to any extent; on the other hand, with rye-grass you can feed it off in August.

75. *The Chairman.*] If I understood you correctly, you said that it cost £1 15s. to prepare the land and grass it if you did your own work?—Yes.

76. Then you told us that it cost 15s. to plough, disc, and harrow it, and get a seed-bed. Then you told us it cost from 15s. to £1 to grass?—Roughly, it pans out £2 10s. 6d. if you pay for your labour