

*To Mr. Sidey:* I am not quite clear as to how the Board should be constituted—it would depend on the questions likely to come before the Board; there would need to be different men dealing with different subjects. The idea of setting up a Board of Science and Industry is a good one; the two would work in together. In regard to my fire-quencher, I may state that I have had it in operation in connection with a portable engine for a considerable time with good results. It is patented in New Zealand and in some other parts of the world. In regard to the question of the cost of living, I would like to draw attention to the importance of the utilization of worked-out sawmill areas, and make some remarks concerning domestic fuels. Large areas of land adjacent to railways, off which milling-timber has been removed, contains an immense quantity of good wood which will eventually be wasted by rotting and burning if left in their present state. The bulk of this can be economically handled and put on the market as cheap firewood if assistance were afforded by the Government by allowing their trucks to be taken over light lines into the old bush workings in order to save double loading and extra haulage. The lines should be laid at the property-owners' expense. At the present time small portable mills can be worked in these areas for the cutting of firewood, and the loading done by elevators. If double-handled the material becomes too expensive for fuel, and would not pay the owner to turn into firewood. Some of these properties also contain brown coal or lignite, and if the same facilities were granted this article could be placed on the market cheaply, besides clearing the lands adjacent to railways, which must have a beneficial effect on railway revenue. The importance of such clearing of these lands is twofold: cheap fuel for the people, and the land would be saved from falling into disuse by weeds and pests. If these facilities were granted the high valuation of much of this land might be justifiable, but which is absolutely extortionate in their present state. Land in stump is not worth more than £1 to £1 7s. 6d. per acre for taxing purposes, as it is well known in Southland that it takes £9 to £12 per acre to put stump land under the plough. Cheap gelignite and rabbit-netting should be provided for the development of virgin land. At present the rents of private railway-sidings are exorbitant. The Government should put switches in at cost.

*To Mr. Veitch:* As to bringing out firewood on existing bush trams, at the present time the question of labour is the trouble. As to putting in special lines, the millers are now too busy trying to make both ends meet in connection with their sawmills. It would mean setting up a special plant. We are considering doing that now if we can get a cheap-enough side line.

*To Mr. Hudson:* I think it would be a good idea if the Government undertook the supply of proper machinery for the removal of stumps—such as log-haulers. At the present time traction-engines, with the aid of gelignite, is our cheapest method of dealing with stumps. I think it would be reasonable to ask the Government to issue gelignite at a reasonable price.

*To the Chairman:* The pre-war price of gelignite was £2 15s. a case of 50 lb. Electric batteries and detonators are very expensive at present.

*To the Chairman:* I will ascertain and let the Committee know the price of gelignite before the war and the price to-day, and will state at what price I think gelignite should be sold at. I went into the question of the price, &c., of a private railway-siding last August. We thought of putting in a private siding for our mill. We thought that if we could get the Government to give us a cheap line into our sawmill it would be a benefit to us and would certainly increase the freights received by the railways. The cost of material at that time ran us into about £300 to get it done. The material put on Government property would always belong to the Government, even although it was not paid for by them. There is an annual charge a year—about £20 or £50 a year. Then there was the question of the weight of the rails which must be used. The Department said they would have to inspect our line after we had made it. They would not allow us to use our own rails; the Engineer said they must be 35 lb. rails. We have rails there which I am satisfied would carry an 8-ton truck of firewood, providing the sleepers were laid close enough and the grade was level. The cost would be £300, and we could not afford it. I suggest that we should be allowed to put down lighter rails. I think we should have a switch to the Government line at cost price. Then there was the question of bringing the loop line in under a 5-chain radius. The position was hedged round with too many difficulties.

WILLIAM HALLIDAY, Farmer, examined.

I am a settler of over fifty years. I wish to advocate State ships. The Government should provide twenty ships, each not less than 5,000 tons, for the purpose of carrying produce to foreign markets and importations of the Dominion's requirements. All the farmers of New Zealand should become shareholders, and should be bound to both ship and import their requisites by the State-owned steamers. The farmers should pledge themselves to the State line, and the Government should co-operate with the farmers and producers. As time goes on the fleet would be added to, in order to provide for increased shipping requirements. Another matter is this: The productions from the soil being the greatest asset this Dominion has, it behoves us to foster that which is the easiest of attainment and best known to the greatest number. After forty years of practical farming I emphasize that lime is a requisite for the soil. I advocate a scheme by which the Government will find the money to establish lime-kilns, built on scientific principles, alongside the deposits. There are many such deposits in Southland. Light lines could be run in to join up with the main lines. The cost of the kiln would be worked out by charging up to farmers for interest and sinking fund.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* Eventually the producers of the country will become the owners of the shipping lines, with the State having a share in them, as it has in the Bank of New Zealand. That would be better than having a purely State concern.