

*To Mr. Craigie:* As to the depletion of our forests, I understand that the Government is taking up the matter of afforestation; we consider that should be done. The bush we are felling is not growing again to the extent we are knocking it down. We think that the Government should institute a proper afforestation scheme. The West Coast is the best place to develop it. The growth of New Zealand trees is too slow; I think the birches are the best of native timber for the purpose so far as growth is concerned. That is shown by the secondary growth of beech or birch on the Midland Railway route.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* There is a considerable quantity of white-pine exported from this district, but it is a gradually decreasing quantity. I believe there are some *Pinus insignis* boxes used for butter in the cold stores at the present time. I do not know of any timber ring. Prices are now fixed by the Board of Trade. They have better facilities for handling long lengths of timber at Puget Sound than we have. Oregon pine does not compare with our red-pine for panel-work. I think that 30,000 acres of forest on the West Coast has been set apart in connection with the paper wood-pulp industry. I understand that the tests which have been made have given satisfactory results.

*To Mr. Veitch:* Since the war started our prices have gone up 52 per cent. and our costs 56 per cent. When the tunnel is completed timber will be much less in the Canterbury District to as far south as Ashburton than it can be delivered at Lyttelton to-day.

*To Mr. Sidney:* Sawmillers, like everybody else, prefer the home to the foreign market. I think that if the right kind of trees are planted we will be able to overtake the shortage of timber. Most of the timber areas were Crown land. Probably about 75 per cent. of the output of timber has gone to Australia because of the shipping shortage here, and because boats were available to take the timber to Australia; but we hope to see these figures reversed.

*To the Chairman:* I think the royalty on red-pine was raised from 6d. to 9d., and white-pine to 1s., per 100 ft., off the saw. For butter-boxes 12 in. wood is required. We are prepared to quote for large quantities provided the whole output of the log is taken; we could not do it otherwise. The freight from here to Lyttelton is 4s. 3d. per 100 ft. It was 4s. 3d. in 1913, and it is the same price now. The wharfage at Greymouth is included in the railage. There will be a saving of about 30 per cent. when the Midland Railway is completed. The completion of the railway will affect the business of the Port of Greymouth; but the North Island trade will still remain: it will only affect the South Island as far south as Timaru. In taking our trees we clean up anything that will cut 6 in. The average mill aims at an output of 10,000 ft. a day.

*To Mr. Forbes:* When the timber is cut out the land will be surrendered to the Crown. Some of the land will be suitable for settlement when cleared, and considerable areas for sheep-grazing. The second growth usually contains a lot of rubbish to begin with, and in some cases beech grows readily. When the red-pine is cut out the white-pine usually dies from exposure through losing the protection of the other trees. We want the Australian market as an overflow market of the New Zealand market.

J. PERRING, Farmer and Contractor, examined.

There is a crying need for a State demonstration farm on the Coast to assist in the development of the land. Some places in New Zealand possess these farms which do not need them as much as we do. We have half a million acres of land that might be made into first-class ground with proper treatment. It could be made to grow clover 2 ft. high. Most of the ground is bush land at present. I am prepared to give the Government 40 or 50 acres to go on with the demonstration farm to develop the country for the good of the people. I would also give them the use of the horses that are there and a complete bone-crushing plant, engine included, with what implements there are on the place.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* The land is situated about a mile from Kumara Junction. I have some land myself, but the extent of the territory I am speaking of is about half a million acres, much of which is easily accessible. There is some swamp land. It contains a cement bottom of from 6 in. to 6 ft.

*To Mr. Luke:* At present the land is being used mostly for grazing. The district does not lend itself to haymaking, but there is no question of the ability of the ground to grow grass. I have also grown good crops of turnips. Why, however, should the farmer be called upon to solve the difficulties? It should be pointed out to him how and where to proceed. I have put up a bone-crushing plant which cost £400. The ground is a mile from Kumara Junction.

*Witness:* I would also like to point out the drawback which families have to submit to owing to the high price of motor tractors. The Fordson is sold in America for £50, but we have to pay £300 or more for it. Tractors can plough 7 acres a day, whereas two horses plough an acre.

*To Mr. Hudson:* If there was a State farm on Canterbury Plain it would be of no value to the ground of which I am speaking. The West Coast would require more than one State farm, but one is enough on the country to which I have drawn your attention. If such a farm were established it would give a fillip to the Coast.

*To Mr. Forbes:* There has been talk of establishing a farm at Totara Flat, but that would be of no use to the land at Runanga. The land is owned by the Government. There is practically no settlement going on on the land now.

JOSEPH TAYLOR, Mine-owner, examined.

I have been requested by the Chamber of Commerce to place before the Committee some of the disabilities under which the gold-mining industry is labouring. During the war costs went up until they are about breaking-point, and I think that for some time prices will be high. Wages