

the land should be put into going order before settlement there is started : are you in favour of that system ?—Well, you are a member of Parliament and I am a departmental officer, and you are asking me as to a question of policy, and I cannot answer that question.

65. I am not asking you to speak for the Government, but as a man, and as to what you think of that system. I think you are entitled to give your own views ?—I think that the idea of breaking up a large area of land, and remunerating the settler all the time he is there, is a good system, provided he is not going to lose money in the years to come. I think that it would be a good idea to put settlers on there and put them under proper supervision. You would then be providing work for a large number of people. But if you put an individual settler in there his first pastures would never remain and he must turn them in again. It is only by a succession of pastures that he would succeed there.

66. You are a Field Inspector ?—Yes.

67. Have you any idea of the amount of land that could be put under cultivation there in the way you suggest ?—As I said, I think that in the main valley, where the railway was to go, there are 100,000 acres, east and west of the railway-line from Rotorua to Taupo, and in the Atiamuri country.

68. You say that some of this land could be brought into cultivation, and that if the land was put in order before the settlers went there they could make good ?—I do not think they could make good. I would like to see that land experimented on, provided that the experiments are not paid for by the settlers.

69. What do you know about the prison farm ?—I have been there but I have not been all over the prison farm—but there you have a better quality of land.

70. You do not know the cost of bringing in that prison-farm land ?—No, I do not know the cost at all.

71. It would be quite easy to get that ?—Yes, it should be, but it all depends upon how the costs have been kept.

72. Have you met Mr. Banks, the Superintendent of that farm ?—Yes, I have met him once. He is very highly respected in the district.

73. Do you know anything about his ability ?—No.

74. Would you be surprised to hear that Mr. Banks has complete and definite confidence in the pumice land ?—No, I would not be surprised, because he would be speaking of his own district, in the vicinity of his farm. I do not think that Mr. Banks has been all over the country, as I have.

75. There are some parts of the pumice country that you do not know ?—I have been all through the country—to Waimarino and Waiouru, and from Galatea to Putaruru. There is very little of the country I do not know.

76. Suppose settlement took place there, how would you propose to take the farmers' produce away from the farms and bring fertilizers to the farms, and take the stock ?—That country is very easily roaded, and with the increase in settlement you would get more stuff to carry, and the cost of cartage must necessarily go down. I understand that at present from Auckland to Taupo the freight is £3 10s. a ton, and the more settlement you get there the cheaper the freights you will get by motor.

77. Do you think it is profitable for a farmer to drive his stock to market on a bitumen road where there is traffic ?—We have driven stock fifteen, sixteen, and eighteen miles without detriment. Another point is that if you establish successful settlement in any community there is going to be their own saleyards established there, and a large quantity of stock will be taken by road.

78. The stock has got to be taken to market ?—But when you get settlement the amount of fat stock going out is not very great—you will have dairying stock, and you will have culls, but you do not worry much about the culls.

79. But the settlement will not consume all the stock ?—No. You express the opinion that there will be difficulty in taking the stock over the roads, but I say that the amount of stock will not be so very great. I am trying to convey to you my impression of Taupo lands as a farming proposition—I am not an engineer, and about the question of road or railway does not concern me very much.

80. You say that in your opinion the Taupo land is not a farming proposition ?—I say that, taking it as a whole, very little of the Taupo land can be regarded as a farming proposition, and I say that a great proportion of the land there cannot be farmed. About 100,000 acres may be farmed—that proportion might be entertained as a definite farming proposition.

81. You do not know of any land in this country—the same type of land—that has been successfully farmed ?—Not the same type of land, no. The only evidence we have to work upon is Reporoa, and Reporoa is a splendid combination of swamp and dry country, which renders it possible to make a living there, but without that swamp country you may regard that Taupo country as a poor proposition.

82. That does not square with the evidence that there are successful farmers there ?—I have not seen successful farmers there.

83. Well, they have lived on the land there ?—But the farmer requires to do better than that.

84. Well, some of them have existed fairly well, and are looking fit ?—A man is adaptable, and you cannot judge of his success by his appearance.

85. *Mr. Massey.* You have stated that the climate there is the country's biggest drawback ?—It is one of the big drawbacks—about the biggest drawback.

86. How does the climate of that area compare with the climate of Rotorua ?—Rotorua is different because it lies in a basin surrounded by hills. You come out of it through a series of hills. You get unseasonable frosts in the Taupo district that they do not suffer from at Rotorua. They also have cold winds there.

87. How does the weather there compare with that at Matamata ?—Matamata is very cold at a definite period of the year, but you do not get unseasonable frosts there, and cold winds. The wind blows straight across from the mountains along the edge of the lake to the north.