

on the land, and the more this country produces, the more new money it brings in, the more prosperous it will be.

Have you considered the question of a subsidy on wheat as against a sliding scale?—I would not recommend it.

You are inclined to suggest a subsidy on flour—that it would be better than a subsidy on wheat?—Yes.

*Mr. Jenkins.*] As to the world parity, do you not think that the New Zealand consumer would expect to get his bread, in the event of an exportable surplus of wheat, at a parity price also? Is it not only reasonable that he should if other countries can get it?—Not necessarily. Take Australia, which is one of the biggest wheat-producing countries in the world: there is a local price, and an export price, and the same would have to apply here.

*Mr. Macpherson.*] Which is the higher?—The local price.

*Mr. Jenkins.*] You as a business man must have a close connection with the farmers in your district. What is your opinion with regard to the dairy-farmer's prospects after he has expended all the energy he can possibly put into his work and paid all the charges: do you think his position would be any better than, or as good as, that of the wheat-producer who has got the protection? The dairy-farmer has to sell against world parity, has he not?—They are two different businesses.

Who owns the best cars—the dairy-farmer or the wheat-grower?—The dairy-farmer's car is a good one: he has a Ford.

You have given us figures as to 250,000 acres producing wheat worth two and a half millions sterling, and if the same land were producing sheep it would return £825,000 you say, which amounts approximately to £3 10s. per acre, gross. The two and a half millions sterling is also the gross. We have had figures put before us showing that the net profit to the grower amounts to 11d. a bushel, or 1s., which gives £1 10s. an acre as the net return for the wheat produced on the 250,000 acres, and I suggest as a sheep-farmer that it would be a bigger net return than the £3 10s. per acre recovered for sheep-raising. I think he would get a net return of £1 10s. per acre there and not run as great a risk owing to climatic conditions. I think the producer there is as well off as the wheat-producer?—Do you want my opinion?

Yes.—The farmer in the wheat-growing district is largely in the same position as the small farmer on a small block of land, and has to go in for intensive farming to be able to live at all, and without rotation of crops he cannot exist more than a minimum of three years or a maximum of four years. He could not otherwise get the return from a small block of land. For instance, on a small block of land which could only carry two hundred sheep we usually reckon a return of £1 10s. per sheep, and after allowing for his interest, depreciation, and the keep of his family he could not live on the £350 a year.

I am referring to the average?—I think the figures probably refer to a special area, to a fairly big block of land—say a big block of 250,000 acres.

With regard to the purchase of wheat by the egg-producers, is it not possible that if there were a ratio of wheat-control between the North and South Islands the egg-producers could not purchase their wheat excepting through some agent who is acting on behalf of control?—I say absolutely "No" to that.

We had evidence given the other day that they could do better through the local agent in Auckland than they could do in Christchurch: is that so?—I say No. There are no sole agencies for the supply of wheat to the farmer in the North Island.

*Rev. Mr. Carr.*] It was suggested by a previous question that the wheat-grower was in a much better position than the dairy-farmer. Do you think the dairy-farmer works the hours the wheat-grower does?—I do not think you can compare the dairy-farmer with the wheat-farmer or the mixed agricultural farmer in regard to their working-hours; they are in a totally different position, and the result from each business all hinges on the cost of land and the management of the business itself.

My impression is that the wheat-grower is working all day long: is that not so?—Yes, and even sometimes after that.

How much did you say was paid in wages to the waterside workers?—£5,223; £36,000 to the men in the threshing-mills, and £4,000 to those handling the grain in the stores.

And we could regard that as a pretty good indication of what would be lost in the wheat business if it ceased?—Yes.

Can any other amounts be added to those?—Yes; the town workers. Wheat-growing covers almost every walk of life.

You have not estimated the actual money value that would be lost?—No, but it would mean a very large sum, and involve untold misery. I do not know how much labour would be absorbed in other work.

These men who are working in the mills follow a sort of rotation, do they not—shearing, harvesting, and then back to threshing?—Yes.

What would be the value of the plant operated by the millowners right through the district of South Canterbury, between the Rangitata and the Waitaki?—£50,000. That information is given to me by the Threshing-mill Owners' Association.

And the coal consumed by the mills would be how much?—I could not say.

Would it be 3,500 tons for the season?—Yes, it would run into that quantity.

It would be New Zealand coal?—Yes.

Then, there would be the wages earned in repairs to mills, and engines, and the engineering trade generally?—Yes—the engineering employees' trade.

*Mr. Macpherson.*] Have you any knowledge of the actual cost of converting the wheat into flour—the wages paid by the flour-mills in your district? That amount will have to be added to the other figures?—Yes; the cost of converting into flour is added to the cost of the wheat by the miller.