

40. But this had low land?—Yes, it is fairly well off for low land.

41. Then would you say that this run has been prejudicially affected?—No; perhaps on the whole it was not.

42. *Mr. Brown.*] Were the rabbits numerous three or four years ago?—They were quite as numerous as they are now.

43. Are they less now than they were three years ago?—Yes, I think that applies to most runs in that country.

44. *Mr. Cowan.*] You state that the working expenses were £3,130. Can you give us the details of that?—Yes, I can give you the details.

45. Does that include cultivation? What is the proportion?—I estimate that the ordinary expenses, excluding outlay, upon an average run in Otago would amount to 1s. 6d. or 1s. 7d. per head.

46. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Is this land subdivided and fenced off?—Yes, the low country is divided from the high, and the winter country from the summer country.

47. *The Chairman.*] You say there was a profit of £1,500 last year, and there has been a loss this year of £1,865?—Yes.

48. Is this a normal year?—No, I do not think so at all. I am not one of those who think that we are never going to have a rise in wool. I think it is bound to go up.

49. Have you made any estimate of the profit for the incoming year?—I cannot do that, for the result of the past year would be the same in the coming year if there is no change in the price of wool.

50. If I understand you rightly, the petition that is before us does not affect this run at all; this run is outside the points raised in that petition?—That petition, I understand, asks for a measure of relief.

51. Yes, but it goes upon the basis of high or low country. The petitioners set out the difficulties they had to contend with under these regulations, which they say misled them?—With regard to the first run, I can state that the regulation falls very seriously, and it would have been utterly disastrous if it had to be worked by itself, the low country being cut off.

52. *Hon. Mr. Ballance.*] In the case of Run No. 200, you say there was not sufficient low country except for freehold?—Except for freehold. There has been a good deal of the country run over, and not taken up for settlement.

53. That was understood at the time, that a portion of this country had been reserved for settlement?—Yes.

54. It was understood that the freehold would be worked with the run?—Yes.

55. The party who bought the freehold bought the run?—Yes.

56. That was understood at the time?—Yes.

57. The original tenant bought by auction?—Yes.

58. Was he considerably run up?—Yes.

59. How much?—The upset rental was £685; the rental now is £1,040. I must say that this was one of the heaviest upset rentals of any run that I know of.

60. Can you give any idea of the position of the adjoining run?—Yes, the Beaumont Run; that was bought by outsiders. The tenant was outbid for the three runs into which it was subdivided; two of them were bought by one person, and the other by another; these men both surrendered, and have been relieved from their obligations by the Government. They were: Mr. Street, who bought the two; and Mr. Spedding bought the other.

61. Do you know who ran the leases up?—I had no opportunity of finding out. Most persons at the auction were represented by agents; I think the man who really ran them up was Proudfoot.

62. *Mr. Macandrew.*] You are content to take the good times along with the bad?—Yes; and my reason for that is: I have freehold adjoining of very great value. This enables me to sell stock fat, instead of store, which means an enormous difference.

63. *The Chairman.*] On Run 223 there was sold £1,500 worth of fat stock: if that stock had to be sold off the run ordinarily worked by itself, would it have fetched that price?—I do not think it would have averaged half that.

64. It shows that freehold is a very great relief to a run?—Yes.

65. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Do you think these runs are fair examples of the position of runs in that country?—I cannot speak of others, because there are certain things in regard to them which I could only know by hearsay. I must leave it to other people to bring their own figures. These were the two runs which I wished to speak to the Committee about. There are other places where the rabbits are more destructive.

---

THOMAS BRYDONE, examined.

66. *The Chairman.*] We are considering the petition of the Otago runholders. Have you any information to give the Committee?—I have just dotted down a few notes which would be the groundwork of the evidence I have to give, and more concise than if I were to make a verbal statement. The first I shall bring to your notice is a run belonging to Messrs. Stewart and Melvin; they are the lessees. I am their attorney in the colony. The old rent that we paid for it was £905, the new rent is £2,131. There was a little alteration, I may mention, in the country; that is to say, we lost a part of the old country. We got some additional land which lay alongside, adding about 10,000 acres to the original part.

67. *The Chairman.*] For the present rent there are 10,000 acres more?—We got that in addition to the original part. The number of sheep shorn last year (1885-6) was 33,000, as near as may be.