

moned to the Supreme Court; and I have been served with a writ. I told the Chief Commissioner that I would be willing to surrender the whole of the country if they would allow me to do so—that, in fact, I would be willing to lose the capital I had sunk in it. If he would allow me to surrender the leases, I was willing to sacrifice my capital. When I offered to surrender the first run it was said it was high country, and no other person would take it up. I hold the low country in the two other leases, so, to obviate that objection, I offered to surrender the lot. Mr. Maitland said he could not entertain the question, as he had no power in the matter; that he was simply instructed to recover the rent. I informed him that, if he obtained judgment against me, my only resource to prevent myself becoming involved in debt was to go through the Bankruptcy Court, which I was prepared to do if pushed to extremities. My runs are on the Kakanui Range, between Pigroot and Kyeburn.

424. That is your position. Do you wish to make any further statement?—No; that is the position at present.

425. Have you made a representation to the Government personally about it?—I wrote to the Crown Solicitor, stating the facts of the case, and I have heard nothing further from him. When I received the writ I wrote, showing him my position, that it was impossible for me to pay the rental; that to do so I would require to borrow; that I had to choose the least of the two evils, either to fall in arrears of my payments to private individuals to whom I owed money, or surrender to the Government.

426. Had you, in your opinion, when you started, sufficient capital to work the run?—I had £2,000 clear cash.

427. Was that sufficient capital to work the run?—Ample for ordinary seasons.

428. Did you work with a profit up to this last year?—I worked with a profit the first year, in 1889, and a small profit afterwards.

429. What stock did the run carry?—The run is carrying a very large stock at present, owing to my improvements and the cultivation of turnips.

430. What is the number?—The number actually on the ground at present is 13,000.

431. Has the loss this year been of such a nature as to cause you to lose your capital and place you in your present position?—There was so much of my capital sunk in fences. I had to pay £760 for fencing, twelve months before I got possession; also £1,000 for a year's rent in advance. Then the fencing that was there, which I had to pay for, was useless in many cases, as the run was cut up into four different blocks, and I only obtained three of the blocks. This necessitated my going to a further expenditure of £600 odd for fencing, so that at present I have nearly £1,400 of my capital sunk in the three runs for fencing alone.

432. Then the division of the runs was the cause for this fencing?—Yes, it was the cause of the excessive amount of fencing.

433. You wish the Committee to understand that your losses this last year have been the cause of your present position, and that you had a profit before this?—Yes; I have paid all expenses so far. I have made nothing for myself during the last three years.

434. But you were going behind?—No, I was keeping the two ends together.

435. *Mr. Lake.*] If I understand you, you were holding 22,000 odd acres, in connection with a considerable amount of freehold, which belongs either to yourself or family?—21,000 acres leasehold, Crown lands, and 1,000 acres freehold, leased from my father.

436. Then if your position is such as you state, any one else, not having freehold, would find it difficult to carry on, and would not be able to give so much rental for it?—The run I wish to surrender has no freehold in it. The freehold land is in the lower country, and not in the run I wish to surrender.

437. I thought you said that you were keeping so large a stock on the three runs because of your having 1,000 acres to cultivate for turnips?—Yes, it is through cultivating for turnips that I am stocking so heavy. It is through going to a great expense in farming that enables me to stock up to the extent I am doing. The carrying capacity of the country in its natural state, before cultivation, was one sheep to two and a-half acres, including the freehold land, which is no better for grazing than the rest of the run until it is cultivated.

438. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Is it not good grass land?—It is not good grass land; that is, it is no good to grow artificial grasses.

439. Has your lambing been any different to previous years?—The lambing last year has been better than for any year since I started. It was 70 per cent. this year.

440. Has the death rate been heavy?—The death rate runs up to 10 per cent. It has averaged from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 10 per cent. right through the block.

441. Have the sales of surplus stock been any less this year than others?—Yes, very much less.

442. Owing to what?—Depreciation in value apparently, a depreciation of  $47\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in my individual case.

443. *Mr. McKenzie.*] In the prices you got?—Yes.

444. *Mr. Lake.*] To what do you attribute your loss this year?—To the fall in the value of wool and stock. It costs me quite £200 per month to keep the rabbits down. This is irrespective of losses sustained otherwise through there being rabbits on the ground.

445. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Is your freehold an average specimen of the Maniototo Plain?—No; there is not another patch on the Maniototo as good for turnip-growing—at least, nothing better.

446. As to its grazing capacity, is it good?—The native pasture is a fair average of the district; but the artificial grasses are of no service whatever, and not so good as the native grass.

447. Is that the case in most of the Maniototo Range?—Yes. If they can irrigate, then they can grow good grass.

448. Do you grow crops at all?—Yes; I grow sufficient for station use—oats principally, to feed the sheep.