

367. What area do you suppose will be taken up, in your opinion, during the next fourteen years, supposing the railway is not added to, and that things remain *in statu quo*?—From 150,000 to 200,000 acres.

368. Very well, then, what proportion of those 200,000 acres, taking your higher figure, will be served in any way by the line now constructed?—In a degree it will be all served.

369. And to that degree the traffic of passengers and of goods will be increased?—Yes.

370. Now, that may amount to a very considerable increase in the present traffic?—Certainly.

371. Can you give me a conjecture as to what the amount may be?—No, I cannot.

372. Quite impossible?—Yes.

373. *Mr. Bell.*] What class of land is this larger area of 150,000 acres which you speak of?—Very nearly all second class.

374. Covered with timber?—A considerable amount of it.

375. It is not available for agriculture, then?—Some of it will be when cleared of timber, but not before.

376. Is the greater part of it fit for agriculture?—No.

377. What proportion of it is?—A small proportion.

378. Can you give any rough guess at it?—It would be a very rough one.

379. I will not press about that. Have you any means of telling me what is the present settled area in the Tadmor, Motupiko, and Sherry Valleys?—I should not like to say offhand.

380. You can give us that?—Yes; I will get the information.

381. Can you give me, roughly, the number of settlers?—I will obtain that also.

382. *Mr. Fraser.*] What proportion does these 30,000 acres bear to the area already settled?—I can supply it on referring to the records.

383. *The Chairman.*] Taking the land in the Nelson Land District, there were several areas probably let on occupation leases, and there were some timber licenses granted: did you credit the revenue from these occupation licenses and timber licenses to territorial revenue or to the Midland Railway Company?—In the case of timber licenses it went to a Suspense Account.

384. And is it still in a Suspense Account?—I believe to.

385. Are you aware whether there is a coalfield in the Tadmor Valley or Whangapeka Valley?—I never heard of it.

386. Have you ever read the geological report on that district?—No. It was made, I believe, some years before I came to this district.

387. Are you aware whether there is coal to be had at Blue Glen?—I have heard a rumour of it.

388. You cannot say of your own knowledge?—No; I have not seen it.

389. Can you tell us whether goods going to Murchison and Fern Flat are carted from Nelson or from the West Coast?—They are carted from Nelson. That is what I said before—to Longford.

390. Can you say as far as Fern Flat?—In my evidence I think I said a few miles further than Longford. I cannot say positively. I have often seen them on the road down there.

391. Do you know the Maruia Plains?—I do not know it personally.

392. *Mr. McKerrow.*] You said these 40,000 or 45,000 acres is all second-class land, of which 10,000 acres is inferior: I presume the agricultural land that is there would not produce any grain for going out of the district?—No.

393. In other words, any agriculture carried on would simply be for home use—potatoes, turnips for sheep, &c.?—That is so.

394. Therefore the whole products of the district would be from the sheep or cattle?—Sheep, cattle, and hops are the only things going out.

395. According to your estimation, how many sheep could graze on these 40,000 or 45,000 acres, presuming it to be in grass, which at present it is not—I want to get at the maximum possibilities of the district?—Judging from what is carried now in that district, the 30,000 acres would carry one sheep to the acre.

396. Do you know within your own knowledge if any fat sheep come from the district now into town here?—Yes; and I saw a fine lot of sheep there last week.

397. So far as the railway traffic is concerned, the only goods sent along the railway to town are some bales of wool, a few fat sheep, and a little hops?—Yes.

398. Then, the inland traffic would be simply groceries, draperies, and other supplies for the settlers?—Yes.

399. And I think you mentioned there might be 150 more holdings than what there are now?—Yes.

400. Did you also state that about twenty or thirty would simply be extensions of the present holdings?—That is so.

401. So, speaking in round numbers, about 110 or 120 might be new holdings?—Yes, new settlement.

402. And the people having these holdings would be purely graziers and people engaged in sheep-farming?—Largely, just the same as they are now; and piggeries, and suchlike.

403. Would there be any dairy farmers?—Oh, yes; all the low hills do very well for dairying.

404. What has been the history of this Tadmor and adjacent country? I know in some districts which are somewhat similar there has been a constant migration of the young men to better districts in the colony—in other words, the population has been stationary in these pastoral districts?—That has been the complaint of the older people—that the young men have gone away.

405. Then, supposing all this land was brought under grass, the increase of population would not be very great from what it is now?—But the young people have gone away for the reason that they cannot get land.