

144. And was no decision ever given?—No. That was four or five years ago, and I have been paying the values put on the land. As the rating-book is made up after the Court sits, I came to the conclusion that the values had been sustained, as no reduction was made. The evidence of Mr. Griffen was that he valued my place as a dairy farm, and the other place as a sheep-run.

145. Do you dairy there?—Yes, I have been dairying for twelve years.

146. Is your land low-lying?—Yes, but some of it is high.

147. How many cows do you milk?—About forty. I convert all the milk into butter on the place, and sell it locally.

148. Have you found it successful?—I have made a living out of it. I have not made a fortune.

149. Has it paid you?—Yes; better than sheep would, I think.

150. How many children have you got?—Three.

151. Do you employ any paid labour in milking?—Yes. Sometimes two, and sometimes as high as six in the harvest-time.

152. What capital had you when you started?—Practically nothing.

153. Have you made anything out of it, or just lived?—I suppose I am worth £3,000 now.

154. That is the result of twelve years at dairy-farming?—Yes.

155. Do you consider Te Aute property fit for dairy-farming?—The greater portion of it is.

156. Are you troubled with dry seasons and droughts?—Some time ago we were. We have not had any for four or five years now.

157. Do you know if any others have been as successful as you have been at dairy-farming?—There are no others.

158. Do you think more money could be made out of sheep than dairy-farming?—Yes, now; but not some time ago.

159. Do you think there is a good opening for dairy-farmers around Te Aute?—If the land was cut up. I do not mean to say the Te Aute College land altogether; but if the surrounding lands were cut up I think it would be a good dairying district.

160. We are dealing with the Te Aute trust lands: are they suitable for dairying purposes?—Yes, a portion, and a portion is not. Probably about a third is not suitable for dairying.

161. Is there anything else you wish to say?—Archdeacon Williams referred to my sale. I offered my stock for sale because I wanted to go in for sheep. I was tired of so much hard work at dairying.

162. Do you think sheep-farming pays better than dairying?—There is no doubt, at present prices; and there is not the same amount of expense.

163. *Mr. Hogg.*] Is this Native land you lease?—Yes.

164. How long is your lease for?—Twenty-one years.

165. Do you get any compensation for improvements at the end of your lease?—No.

166. I see your improvements are valued at £359 altogether?—Yes.

167. You have a good house and everything erected?—Yes.

168. Do you think you could do well enough on a sheep-farm of the size of your leasehold—192 acres?—No. I have between 200 and 300 acres altogether. I think one could make a living at present prices on from 300 to 400 acres.

169. Supposing the price of wool went down to 6d. or 7d. or 8d.?—Everything depends on the price of wool. I know the last wool I had I sold for 4½d. per pound on the London market.

170. Have you been over the College lands?—Yes, many a time. I know the character of the country.

171. Into how many reasonable-sized homesteads do you think it could be cut up, both as sheep-farms and dairy farms?—I suppose, into eight or ten reasonable farms.

172. Have your cattle suffered at all from these dry westerly winds we have heard so much about?—I never noticed it. The first year I started was the worst we had. That is the only year I felt the pinch.

173. But, generally speaking, the climate is right enough for dairying purposes?—I find it right enough.

174. Do you consider the Te Aute College lands are very much undervalued as compared with your own?—There is no doubt about that. Three or four years ago, when I objected, Te Aute College land was valued at £3 12s. unimproved value, and I was valued at £8.

175. What was the value of Te Aute College land in 1903?—I think the present value shows the first increase.

176. What would you value the Te Aute trust estate at all round if you were going to buy it?—I think it would be a fair thing to give from £7 to £8 for it.

177. What would be a fair rental for twelve years, without the improvements?—I took up my leases without improvements, and I am paying 7s. per acre for one, and 10s. for another, and 12s. for the others. That is not exactly according to the quality of the land; but I took up the lease at 7s. per acre some time before I took up the others.

178. *Mr. Elliott.*] What is the proportion of flat land to hills?—I suppose about 25 per cent. is flat.

179. Is your holding equal to the general run of holdings at Hatuma?—Oh, yes; it is better quality.

180. *Mr. Lee.*] Do you think the high price you are paying is due to the fact that your land is in small sections?—I have no doubt there is a good deal in that.

181. Do you not also think that your land is evidently assessed as dairying land as against sheep land?—I cannot say; it may be, but I do not think it would be fair. I think the land should only be valued for what it is worth.