

10. How much is there that would take the longer term, twenty-one years, to work out?—In Mr. Massey's case, he holds a number of areas under the old Act, and consequently it will take him a long time to work it out.

11. Was there no specified time to work it out under the old Act?—Not specifically mentioned in the Act.

12. Nor in the agreement of lease?—Not in the regulations.

13. And he may be storing that up without cutting for some years to come, may he not?—Yes.

14. If he is not compelled to cut it within a certain time he may be holding it?—I believe that is so.

15. Could you tell us anything approaching the quantity Mr. Massey holds—the area?—I think we made out a list of that also—something like 6,000 acres.

16. And that is not all under the original unconditional leases?—No, not all.

17. How much of it, can you say?—I should say there is about 2,000 acres, as near as I can remember, under the old Act.

18. Do you know if he is working on these leases at the present time?—Yes, he is working in them at the present time.

19. And what proportion with regard to the mill-power on the unconditional leases?—His mill-power on the unconditional leases is about sixty-horse power, and he has got only one mill working on all those areas, under the old Act of 1886.

20. How long has the mill been working on that?—About six or seven years, I should say—perhaps a little more. I really cannot say from memory.

21. Can you tell us approximately what amount of that he has cleared?—I think he has abandoned one area and a part of two. I should say he has abandoned three or four hundred acres.

22. And he ceases to pay rents for those he has abandoned?—He ceases to pay taxes on them.

23. But he is still paying taxes on the balance of the 2,000 acres?—That is so.

24. How long do you think at the rate he has been going that he will be able to work it out to a finish?—I should say it would take him about twenty years, or fifteen years, at all events.

25. Is there any other besides that which Mr. Massey has on unconditional leases?—No, there are no other unconditional leases now in Southland I understand.

26. Can you tell us what has been done with the land he has abandoned?—There has been nothing done so far.

27. Not been offered for lease to any one else?—No, none of that has been offered for lease.

28. And will it be growing noxious weeds?—Well, there is very little in the way of noxious weeds at the present time on it. It has been sown. There was a fire run through part of it, and the Lands Department here sowed it with grass.

29. And have they not let it to any one after sowing it in grass?—No. We offered it for lease, but, so far, nobody has taken it up.

30. What upset have you put on?—I think as near as I can remember 2d. or 3d. per acre per annum. Those lands adjoining were similarly burnt and sown, and have been let, some at 6d. and some at 3d. per acre per annum.

31. Have you been over these lands recently?—I was over them within the last four months.

32. And has the grass taken well on the portion abandoned by Massey?—Yes, fairly well; but not as well as other land we opened for settlement and properly burned.

33. You did not observe many noxious weeds?—Not very many.

34. Is there any Californian thistle?—There are some.

35. Has there been anything done to keep it from spreading?—Oh, yes! I think the Department has sent men to cut them down.

36. Could you tell us the rents Mr. Massey is paying for this land he still holds?—No, I could not.

37. It could be got from the books here?—Yes, certainly.

38. *Mr. Hanan.*] Your duties take you all over Southland and Stewart Island, do they not?—Yes.

39. Could you give us any information as to what is going on in the way of cutting out of bush in Stewart Island?—Yes. There are three small mills working there at the present time.

40. What areas are held there?—Only two areas. Two mills are working in Crown forests, and one mill in a private forest.

41. Now, at the present rate of milling, how long do you think it will be before our bush is cut out within a radius of thirty miles of Invercargill?—That is a fairly big question. There is Mr. Massey's mill at Gorge Road.

42. How many miles is Gorge Road mill from here?—It is twenty miles from here. It would not take very long to work out the balance within a radius of thirty miles from here, because the Waiau River is something like fifty-five miles from here, and thirty miles would reach something like Colac Bay, on the Riverton line, and I should say Fairfax, on the Nightcaps line. It would not take long to work that out. That would not even include Moore's area.

43. Would you say ten years?—I should say twelve years would work that out within thirty miles.

44. And you would expect timber to increase in price?—No, I do not expect timber to increase in price.

45. Not in face of the fact that you have got to bring it a greater distance, and the extra cost of production in having to operate in hilly country?—Well, they cannot operate in worse country than they are operating in at the present time.

46. But they will be further away?—A little further by rail only—it would mean a matter of a few pence in twenty or thirty miles.