

27. Supposing the sugar-beet was grown to a large extent in Waikato, and the cartage was over a distance of, we will suppose, five miles, could the local bodies make arrangements by which these roads could be metalled at reasonable cost?—I think it would be very expensive there, where everything has to come in by train. There is no metal at all in Waikato.

28. Where, in your opinion, would the most suitable land be available?—The general opinion would be, between Hamilton and Cambridge.

29. Where is the metal got from?—From Te Kuiti.

30. What would be the distance to take it by rail, approximately?—If you take Hamilton as the centre, it would be about sixteen or eighteen miles from Taupiri, or more.

31. Have you any estimate of the cost of metalling, say, delivered at the railway-station?—Not in Waikato, but in our own part the metal generally costs us about 10s. per yard. Then there is carting and spreading after that. In some parts it costs more.

32. *Mr Okey*] I should like to ask, Mr Craig, how often you could put in a crop of beet. Would one crop follow another?—I should say certainly not, in the Waikato. The ground is very liable to run to sorrel after cropping.

33. What would be a fair crop of sugar-beet?—I could not really say, but I should think about 10 to 20 tons, about 15 tons is the average.

34. Have you any idea of what it could be delivered to the factory for within a radius of six miles—what would be the cost per ton?—It depends upon the state of the roads and the time of year. It would be rather expensive carting, especially if you had no metal on the roads.

35. Have you had experience in a sugar-beet factory?—No.

36. You could not speak of what is done with the offal or refuse?—No, but I understand that cattle can be fed on it.

37. What have you grown per acre?—I could not tell you, because I have never got a crop right through anywhere.

38. What manure did you use?—Artificial manure.

39. You have not got much hope of it being a success in Waikato?—Not from my own experience, and I have given it a good many trials.

40. *Mr Field*.] Mr Craig, you are a practical farmer, are you not?—I have been at it for over thirty years.

41. How long has your experience in beet-growing lasted?—About twenty-four or twenty-five years.

42. And you have been doing it strenuously all that time?—No, only occasionally. The results were not very good.

43. Have you ever been in any other countries where it has been grown successfully?—Not sugar-beet, only good mangolds.

44. You have got no special knowledge of sugar-beet growing?—No.

45. Can you tell us what class of land is most suitable for growing beet, heavy or light?—I think light soil is best.

46. You have never tried it on sandy loam—river-flat ground?—Yes.

47. On swampy land?—Never.

48. Has it ever been tried in the Waikato?—I do not know at all. There is a large area of swampy land there with more or less timber on it. That makes it very difficult for ploughing, &c.

49. Have you any idea of the cost of getting timber out of swamps?—It depends a great lot on the class of timber.

50. The timber is pretty thick in the swamps?—In some of them.

51. Can you give us an idea how much per acre it would cost to take the timber out of the swamps?—I can give no idea, but perhaps £1 or £1 10s. would clear the average acre.

52. And enable you to till it to a foot deep?—Probably.

53. When you say that you think it would not do to take several crops running, could you do it if you manured the land?—You could if you put in the proper amount of time; otherwise the expense of cultivation in the following year would be as great as in the first year. It is necessary to manure in each year.

54. Do you know whether you can grow sugar-beet within a certain distance of the sea?—No, I do not know anything about that.

55. You think that the success of the proposal would largely depend upon the cheapness of labour?—The cheapness of labour and the contiguity of the central receiving-station.

56. You would want all other conditions very favourable?—Yes.

57. *The Chairman*.] There is a difference in the quality of the country where you experimented at the Waipa Flats and the Thames Valley?—Yes, there is a great difference.

58. *Mr Buchanan*.] Is not the level soil of the Waipa Flats considerably mixed with drift pumice?—Not as far as I know.

59. Is a little pumice not an advantage rather than a disadvantage, inasmuch as it enables you to work the soil in a freer way?—It keeps the soil from caking.

JAMES ALEXANDER YOUNG, Dentist, and Mayor of Hamilton, examined. (No. 2.)

*The Chairman* Will you be kind enough to give the Clerk of the Committee your full name?

*Witness* James Alexander Young, dentist, and Mayor of Hamilton. I have been sixteen years resident in the Waikato. I am interested in agriculture and farming, and fourteen years ago I interested myself in the sugar-beet movement, and ever since then have made a considerable study of the subject. As far as I know, there is only one other gentleman in the Waikato who has taken a deeper and keener interest in this subject, and he is Mr W. A. Graham, of Hamilton. It is regrettable that Mr Graham is not at present in New Zealand, as he would have been very