

66. What proportion of the total output would go to Australia?—Very nearly the whole of the output goes to Australia; there is very little demand in New Zealand for butter-boxes—comparatively small compared with the amount of cutting.

67. *Dr. Hight.*] There is an export duty on white-pine?—No.

68. *The Chairman.*] Is there any statement you could make that has not been elicited by the questions, or anything in regard to the rise of price that you wish to say?—I am not aware of anything; I think you have covered the ground pretty fully.

FREDERICK G. M. BRITTEN, Surgeon, of Christchurch (late of Te Puke, Bay of Plenty), examined on oath. (No. 37.)

*Witness* said he had been paying 8d. per loaf for bread, 4 lb. loaf, at Te Puke, whereas when he came down to Christchurch it was 6d. One of the reasons for that was the cost of transit, and the other, monopoly. At Te Puke there was only one baker within eighteen miles, and this man could charge just what he liked. *Witness* lived within half a mile of the bakery, but could not get the bread for less than 8d. At one time there were three butchers in the township, but they amalgamated, and charged what they liked for meat, and the meat was the worst he had ever tasted. £30,000 or £40,000 worth of meat was exported, and the rejects kept for local consumption. He did not think there was any monopoly in regard to bread in Christchurch; he thought there was free competition. *Witness* gave figures as to cost of freight on goods shipped by the Northern Steamship Company—£19 from Te Puke to Auckland by steamer for 11½ tons. The Northern Steamship Company had a monopoly. He believed it cost more to get goods from Auckland to Te Puke than from America to Auckland.

*Mr. Fairbairn* said the freight from America to Auckland was much higher than that.

*Witness* produced account from Express Company showing how the freight charges and incidental expenses were made up. The Northern Steamship Company charged these high rates on the necessities of life, and then there was a clique of people in Te Puke who kept the monopoly in their own hands. There were hundreds of thousands of acres of unproductive land about Te Puke, and now that the railway was being made there the population would increase and competition would come in. The land-values would increase too. He was up in the district two and a half years ago, and he was certain it would be the orchard of New Zealand; there was some of the best country with the best climate in the Dominion. *Witness* gave details of the insufficient municipal work done in the way of roading and channelling and asphaltting. There was no registration of the births, deaths, and marriages among the Maoris. The Maoris died without anybody trying to find the cause, and no steps were taken to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. He knew that the price of land had gone up 80 to 100 per cent. since he had been there; he knew one person who was holding on to some thousands of acres waiting for the unearned increment, and only employing one man on the land. There had been a good many land-sales lately. Rural areas brought £20 to £25 per acre at the outside. One grazing-farm (dairy farm) he knew brought £30: that was within two miles of the township—an improved farm. The unimproved land went for from 25s. per acre up to a few pounds per acre: that was within five or six miles of the township.

HOWARD WALTER HESLOP, Representative of Messrs. H. L. Bowker and Son, Land and Estate Agents, examined on oath. (No. 38.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Are you well acquainted with this district?—Yes, I have been here since 1881.

2. Has there been any considerable increase in the land-values in Christchurch?—My experience from that standpoint does not date back to 1881, but I can say that during the last ten or fifteen years there has been a very marked increase.

3. What percentage has it risen during the last twenty years?—That depends entirely on the locality; some localities have increased more than others.

4. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Have all localities increased?—Yes, on the legitimate values. In some areas there are some fictitious sales which cannot be taken as any criterion of the value of the property. For instance, of what we call “illegitimate” values, such as away in north New Brighton, the people speculate in land where there is no legitimate demand; we do not consider those “values” at all in the right sense of the word.

5. *The Chairman.*] Has that increase which affects Christchurch affected also the whole of the land in Canterbury?—Possibly not from the same cause. My experience is limited to city and suburban property, not rural land.

6. What has caused the increase in value in urban and suburban lands?—Increased prosperity and increased population; it is purely a question of supply and demand.

7. Then, this rise in value is mostly a community-created value?—Yes.

8. Do you think the increased cost of land has added directly or indirectly to the cost of living?—No, I do not think so.

9. You do not think so?—Except from the standpoint of the man who is living in a more palatial home. I take it that this Commission deals more with the man where it is a question of a small income—the average man. Of course, if a man has to pay more for a section—say he pays £100 more for a section—the increase to him is only £5 per year—that is not very material.

10. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] Oh, that is 2s. per week?—Of course, it must increase the cost of living in that sense.

11. *The Chairman.*] Is not that balanced by other lands being cut up into sections, adjacent lands, so that he has a better chance of going further out and getting a cheaper allotment?—I do not think so. The rating on unimproved values has meant the cutting-up of more blocks of