

43. You know the Te Ngae farm on the road from Rotorua?—Yes.

44. That Mission Station on pumice land has been in occupation for fifty years?—Yes.

45. And that is where the Meat Company keeps its fat stock?—Yes.

46. That is carrying grass as well as any lands in the Waikato at the present time?—Yes, that is within my knowledge.

47. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] You say that if the tramway were extended from Mokai to Taupo it would then open up better lands than the unoccupied Crown lands in that district?—Yes. If extended from Mokai to Taupo it would be the means of giving access to all the Crown lands I have mentioned, and to all the Native lands as well.

48. Where are the bulk of the Crown lands which are unlet?—Just south of the Waikato River and then going on beyond Taupo. They are scattered all over the district within the watershed. The extension would go through nearly all Crown lands, except one block.

49. I think you said 81,000 acres were let?—Yes, under grazing licenses.

50. Are they grazing stock—cattle?—I do not think they are doing anything with them at present, or very little.

51. With regard to the classification of the areas into which the blocks would be subdivided, from 300 to 800 acres: would that apply generally, or only to agricultural portions?—I said from 300 to 800 acres, but in some cases it might require 3,000 acres. But I am speaking generally of land required for close settlement.

52. That would bring it within the means of small farmers?—Yes, that is my opinion.

53. You know Captain Mair's farm?—I do.

54. Have you been on it?—Yes.

55. That is on pumice land?—Yes.

56. I believe Captain Mair has won prizes for turnips at the show?—Yes, they cultivate turnips. It is the same class of country.

57. *Mr. Wilson.*] What would you say this country would carry under the conditions you speak of?—By and by, with proper cultivation, I should say most of the land will carry a sheep and a half to the acre—perhaps up to two.

58. You think this country is better than the down country at Taihape?—No, that country carries two sheep to the acre in some cases.

59. What would it cost for that?—£2 10s. per acre to bring it into grass.

60. Would it not cost that for the first crop? Is it not usual in a new country to sow clover?—Yes, but a number of settlers put it into grass at once.

61. That is not considered the best plan?—That is a matter of opinion—farmers differ.

62. How long does the grass last?—After being down three or four years it ought to be ploughed in again, then it would last a long time after that. It is purely a matter of opinion.

63. Do you not think yourself, after your long experience, that it would be better to give this country in large areas?—I used to think so, but now, if cut up into farms of from 300 to 500 to 800 acres, I believe that land will be found to be more profitable eventually when farmed in areas of that size.

64. *Hon. Dr. Pomare.*] Did you say that the extension of that line would go through Crown lands only?—Nearly all Crown lands. There is one Native block—the Tatua West—the rest is nearly all Crown land.

65. It is Crown land that would be benefited principally?—No, the whole of the Native land around would feel it.

66. The immediate lands adjoining would be the Crown lands?—Yes, most of it, except at Wairakei.

67. *Mr. Buick.*] You say you are intimately acquainted with this country?—Since 1871 or 1872.

68. And there is a great difference in the class of country?—Bush land is considered good land.

69. You think, notwithstanding Mr. Buchanan's questions, that the lands cannot be profitably worked unless you have cheap transit for manure?—That is my idea.

70. And is there any line of route that would serve both this country from Taupo to Rotorua and from Taupo to Putaruru on the company's line?—I said that had there been no line built from Putaruru to Mokai, then undoubtedly one would have said the proper line would be that from Rotorua; but as this line has been built and is in working-order, and will serve the country just as well as that lying to the east, it would be better to have the present line.

71. But the line from Rotorua to Taupo could not have served the country now being served by the present line?—No, it could not.

72. *Mr. Collins.*] Some ten years ago this area was offered as temporary grazing-run, and was not taken up?—The greater part of the land had been offered under pastoral license.

73. Now, the terms of a pastoral license are that the Crown can resume the land at any time on notice to the tenant?—No, if classified as pastoral agricultural land you can resume.

74. Can you tell us how this was classified?—As pastoral land, and therefore could not be resumed.

75. Except at the end of twenty-one years?—Yes. It could then be resumed by the Crown.

76. On payment of compensation for improvements?—There is no improvement until after twenty-one years, except that it is loaded with the value of sheep-proof or rabbit-proof fencing.

77. The rental in such a case is not less than 2½ per cent. on the value of the land?—That is the small grazing-runs. A very low value was put on them about twelve or fourteen years ago.

78. The object of this mode of settlement was to bring inferior lands into cultivation while at the time retaining the freehold in the hands of the Crown?—Probably.