

process of being settled, I understand. In fact, the Bank of New Zealand had some cultivation on it, but I am informed that the owners have been offered 17s. 6d. an acre for at least 20,000 acres since the company began its operations. Then there is the block called Smith's block, of 58,000 acres. That has been sold and is being subdivided. I understand that 20,000 acres of it have been sold to eight settlers at from £1 5s. to £1 10s. per acre. Smith's block comes down from the Waikato. The block adjoining the Waikato was largely Native, but there are two dairy farms there at the present time, and settlers have recently begun dairy-farming operations on those two properties. That comprises practically the whole of the private lands between Putaruru and Mokai, with the exception of the company's land of 43,000 acres. The rest is Native and Crown land.

28. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] What is the total area of the private lands?—It must run into about half a million acres, I should think.

29. How much does the company own of that?—43,000 acres.

30. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You have not cited nearly the whole of that area?—I have only been giving you the area along the line at present constructed. The remainder of it is down south. There are 60,000 acres of Vaile's property, and then there is the Ohiwa Block, south of Taupo. I have been speaking only of the lands along the present railway-line.

WEDNESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1912.

WILLIAM ROLLITT sworn and examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer, residing at Lichfield.

2. *Hon. Sir J. Finlay.*] Have you a statement prepared?—There are one or two statements I would like to make. I was here when the evidence of Mr. Barnett, a neighbour of mine, was given some days ago, when he went into the question of bringing this particular land into cultivation. Before I left home I took out of my books the amount it cost me to put about 200 acres in grass. I think it would, perhaps, be interesting to the Committee to know what it costs. I might say the labour was done by my boys, but in the estimate of the cost I have included the cost of living and rent. It does not include interest on implements or the cost of horseflesh. I have had to buy all my oats for feeding purposes. I will give you an estimate of what it will cost to bring this land into cultivation. I have reckoned what it has cost us to live, and for seed and manure, also rent, but not wages. I take it that if any settler goes on to land to bring it into a state of efficiency this is what he can expect it will cost at the beginning. He gets his profit out of the grass afterwards, but you can put down what you think proper for wages. As Mr. Barnett said, he does not base his calculations on that. I put in 24 lb. of seed per acre—that is, cow-grass, cocksfoot, and Italian rye and white clover. That cost me 16s. 1d. per acre.

3. *Mr. Wilson.*] Give us the quantities?—1 lb. of white clover, 7 lb. of cow-grass, 6 lb. of cocksfoot, and 10 lb. of Italian rye. The total cost was 16s. 1d. I might say I bought it for prompt cash.

4. *Mr. Buchanan.*] That is 24 lb. altogether?—The white clover was 1s. per pound; cow-grass, 1s.; cocksfoot, 9d.; and Italian rye, 3d. I put 2 cwt. of manure in to the acre, two parts of superphosphate and one part of Maldern Island guano: that comes to 11s. at 5s. 6d. per hundredweight.

5. *Mr. Buck.*] Do you get it delivered on the ground for that?—Yes. That makes a total of £1 7s. 6d. per acre. Now, added to that I put down the working-expenses at £1: that covers the cost of living and horse-feed, &c. If you work that out you will find it pretty well substantiates what Mr. Barnett said in his evidence.

6. *The Chairman.*] That is not allowing anything for your own labour?—No, nor any interest on the capital as far as the horses are concerned and implements. Now, what I want to show is, if you put men on that particular land, what the prospects of their making a living out of it are as compared with putting them on bush land. I have no intimate knowledge of bush land, and have only the evidence of other people as to the cost of burning, felling, and grass-seeding it. From the evidence I have had I understand you cannot do it under £3 to £3 10s. per acre. Well, if you can get this class of land into grass for a lesser sum than that the advantage of using the pumice land from a farmer's point of view is this: I presume, taking the King-country, you get considerable frosts, and where you do you get no grass—that is a natural sequence—and you cannot, owing to the stumps, plough it and grow turnips for winter feed. You can go on the pumice land at any time, and we can show you as good turnips grown on pumice land as can be grown in any part of New Zealand. I have seen 90 acres of turnips sold for £300 cash. They were grown at Lichfield by a man named Davis, who will confirm everything I say. If you can get results like that I think as a settler it was better for me to go on that class of land than to go on bush land. I might say that I am here—somewhat like my friend from Rotorua—from a selfish point of view. I am on the Taupo Totara Timber Company's line of railway, and personally, if I were sure that company were going to run their line for all time I would not wish the Government or any one else to take it over. I will give you the reasons why: I have a considerable frontage within three-quarters to a mile from the timber company's line. We can get a dray over it, and the company has met us in this way: that wherever you want your stuff, they say, "Show us the spot, and we will dump it down for you." If the Government owned the line we would have to go to a station perhaps three or five miles away. That saves us a day's carting. The Rotorua people try to make out that the timber company is behaving badly to us, but that is not so. I have gone into the company's yard and picked out the building timber I required, made my bargain for that particular timber, and it has always been delivered to the