

31. You told us that you did not charge for your labour?—That is so.

32. If that was fair as applied to open land it would be fair as applied to bush land?—I do not think it would be, because the bulk of the expense in clearing bush land is on account of labour. My boys have been ploughing 3 acres a day with a double-furrow plough.

33. Supposing you were keeping a set of books for the farm, would that be your plan of reckoning up your profit and loss account for the year?—I do not think so.

34. You reckon the cost of felling and grassing a piece of bush land at £3 10s. an acre?—I said I was told that was the price. I had no knowledge of it.

35. You know nothing about breaking in bush land?—Nothing whatever.

36. I paid my ploughman that I had for a good many years, roughly, £2 a week, including keep, but he saved his money and has gone on a piece of land of his own. How would you explain his labour being worth £2 a week while he was with me, and when he went on his own place—as he might have done in your neighbourhood—his labour was worth nothing at all?—You must remember that I have credited ourselves with the cost of living.

37. That would be only 25 per cent.?—I have left it to you gentlemen to determine what the wages ought to be.

38. You lived in Canterbury a good many years?—Yes.

39. What would you call the return of oats there per acre on the average?—From 25 to 30 bushels.

40. What is the maximum crop you have seen there?—I have grown 102 bushels myself.

41. And the minimum?—The minimum was that I turned the sheep into it.

42. It was a very dry year?—Yes.

43. Would you not get a very much better crop of oats in Canterbury than the 10 in. growth referred to by Mr. Crowther?—I did not see that. I can only give evidence on what I know myself. The great point I wish to make is that they can get winter feed on this ground.

44. *Mr. MacDonald.*] In ploughing or sowing and crop, even grass, you can get very quick results compared with bush land. If you start in March you do not burn your bush off the land until December or January; whereas in your case you would get it in six months at least as against twelve months in the case of bush?—I started ploughing in August, put some spring grass in in November, and had horses and cows on it in January.

45. *Mr. Wilson.*] You are an advocate of private ownership in the railway?—No, personally I do not care whether it is private ownership or not, so long as it is continued.

46. Your experience shows that you get greater satisfaction?—I find it is very much cheaper than carting.

47. There is an enormous area of this country, and it would be absolute folly to have no access to it?—Absolutely.

48. It is recognized by many men that there is no permanency in this country?—A man named Fleming settled there about four years ago, and the first year he put down 200 acres in grass, and it is there yet.

49. It is recognized that the first sowing is not a permanent grass?—It is recognized that every time you plough it it improves it.

50. What is the annual cost of manures? Supposing your first sowing is a permanent grass, what would you put on?—I suppose in about three years you would have to top-dress it.

51. What would you put on then?—Basic slag, about 3 cwt. I have got a very good result from 2 cwt.

52. You have given us a list showing the cost: is not that a very low average?—No, I do not think so.

53. With reference to cutting the lands up into small areas, what would you say was a fair area?—I am not quite at one with the evidence I have heard given. I am of opinion that larger areas would be better.

54. Do you not think it would be folly to put poor men on that land?—There is no disguising the fact that a man must have capital.

55. In fact, he wants a fair amount of capital to get it broken in quickly?—I do not think it requires so much as with bush land.

56. Is there any employment in this country for “cockatoos”?—I think most of them are working their own places.

57. In bush countries there is a good deal of employment?—Of course, these men take contracts from other farmers.

58. What do you think this country, when broken in, will carry in sheep?—I think it will carry a sheep and a half to the acre.

59. Without any fertilizers?—No, you must use fertilizers, but probably not to the extent you might think.

60. *Mr. Raw.*] Would you mind telling the Committee at what distance you are actually by rail at Putaruru from a straight line?—Fifteen miles.

61. And what rate do you pay for the carriage of goods?—I have a special rate with the Taupo Totara Timber Company. I deposit a sum of money with it for anything I want. My account is always in credit, and there is no book-keeping.

62. Then you do not object to the Taupo Totara Timber Company in any shape or form, so long as it continues to run its tramway as at present?—No.

63. And the cost of conveying your goods fifteen miles is very small indeed?—Yes.

64. In the prices you gave you said your manure cost 11s. landed on the place: did that include the cost of freight?—I bought ex ship.

65. The price is a fine one for manures so far away from a port?—I can prove it.