

27. *The Chairman.*] I notice that you said in your evidence last year that the vegetation is principally the ordinary tussock—the silver-tussock?—That is the principal form of grass that is seen there.

28. You told Mr. Buchanan to-day that you thought there ought to be large holdings?—Yes.

29. That is down the route of that railway?—Of course, I can only speak of the route of the railway for a certain distance, say, about half-way from the Waikato to Mokai.

30. Do you think that along the railway a man could make a living on 300 acres?—I should not expect it myself.

31. Does the land grow good roots?—I have seen very good roots growing on that country.

32. That is, with plenty of manure?—With reasonable manuring.

33. What would you call reasonable manuring?—The usual manure applied in the Waikato. I take that district because the lighter land of Waikato is of a somewhat similar formation: it is generally 3 cwt. of manure to the acre.

34. *Mr. Buick.*] As a rule 2 cwt. would not be quite enough?—Even more than 3 cwt. would be useful; then it becomes a question of cost.

35. *The Chairman.*] You said last year that fruit will grow very well there. With manure, or without?—There are fruit-trees that were established there many years ago by the Natives and the missionaries; they were very satisfactory, and without manure, as far as that goes. But that is not quite the point; all commercial orchards are manured.

36. I meant, would you need an extra amount of manure in that country?—Probably more.

37. Would it become a fruit-growing country, do you think?—Up to a limited extent.

38. Apples?—Apples principally. Apples are practically the only form of fruit that has any promise of being profitably cultivated or conveyed to other countries. It is to exportation that one would look to for the development of fruit-growing.

39. Would you think of putting people there as orchardists on such small areas?—One would not. At present I think one would feel rather doubtful in recommending any very enormous extension of fruit-growing anywhere in New Zealand; so that my answer does not apply to this district only.

40. You have told us already that you think it would be wise to have the railway to give facilities for transport of manures and produce, and other things?—I cannot imagine this country as likely to develop until there is railway communication.

41. Last year some of the witnesses gave evidence to the effect that certain of the swamps would be worth £20 an acre after being drained: is that correct?—I do not think we have tested those swamps sufficiently to put a value of that kind on them. There are useful swamps there—some particularly good. One has to take into consideration the locality; they are rather far from a market in any case. Although there are certainly good swamps.

42. Are there any along this line of railway?—I do not know of any extensive swamps in that direction.

43. I notice that last year you said that in the Waikato the land was ten times as valuable as the land shown on this map. Are you still of that opinion?—Yes. I think the first question was, What is its value? It is very difficult to put a money value on such land. It was only arrived at by a comparison with some other country.

44. Do you know the country at the foot of the lake about Tokaanu?—Yes.

45. One witness to-day told us that the land, taking an area round from that small lake—Rotoaira—was all first-class land—that is, the slopes leading down to the lake—and as good as any country in New Zealand: I think that is what he inferred?—There is some good land, as the swamp at Tokaanu, and the hills that are now carrying timber are good land. I should not have regarded any of the land in that direction as being the equal of—

46. Say, the Wairarapa: he said (the other witness) the Wairarapa?—I should not have included any of this land in the same class as those that were forest-clad in the Wairarapa.

47. He told us that land in the delta of the Tongariro River—I think he said—was first-class land, and that wheat had been grown on some portions of it for fifteen years continuously?—There is some very good land on the swamp at the delta, close to Tokaanu.

48. Do you think there are several thousands of acres there fit for wheat?—I could not say what the area is; it is fairly extensive, but I do not think wheat would be grown there. The land would produce wheat probably. I have seen maize growing there.

49. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it not a fact that, speaking generally, for apple-growing clay land is considered amongst the best?—The apple is supposed to be suitable particularly to clay lands, but it also adapts itself to other kinds of soil.

50. It depends upon the variety, I suppose?—To some extent; still, the apple-tree will adapt itself to many conditions.

51. But, speaking generally, what I have stated is correct?—Speaking generally, it is a clay-land tree.

52. *The Chairman.*] Do you know anything about a poisonous plant on the Waimarino Plains—a small, low-growing plant amongst the grass?—I have heard it spoken of, but I cannot tell you the name of the plant. I have not understood that it was of any very serious importance. It was claimed regarding the celmisia, the so-called cotton-plant, that stock eating it were affected by the fluff from the leaves; but I do not think that is of importance.

53. Did you ever hear of a number of hoggets dying on account of this poisonous plant, and it being so serious that it interfered with the carrying of stock on the Waimarino Plains?—No.

54. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it your experience that in pumice country a difficulty frequently arises in carrying the hoggets through the winter?—I do not think that difficulty applies more to pumice country than to other land. It is a question of providing the proper feed.