

ALEXANDER CHARLES ROSS sworn and examined. (No. 13.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am the Dairy Instructor and Grader, and have been here three years and three months, having been transferred from Taranaki, where I was two years in the Government service. Prior to that for seven years I was manager of a dairy factory.

2. Did you ever try any experiments with other timber than white-pine for butter-boxes?—Some years ago, in Southland, when I was managing secretary of a factory, some cheese-crates were sent down from Dunedin. They were not made of white-pine, but a kind of birch. They proved unsuitable, being too brittle.

3. Is it necessary to paraffin timber for cheese-crates?—No, as long as it is strong and pliable.

4. Do you know the tawa?—No.

5. Have you seen the imported boxes Mr. Moritzen has here?—I was shown a sample last night, but they seemed to have a resinous smell, and I do not think they will suit. They may.

6. Do you know anything about the Canadian system of packing butter?—No; Mr. Singleton, who has been in Canada, can tell you about it.

7. Is much land in Otago devoted to dairying and cheesemaking?—It is an increasing industry, especially in Catlin's district.

8. *Dr. Cockayne.*] How long would it be before the resin would taint the butter?—Before it had been packed two weeks.

9. Supposing we had no kahikatea in New Zealand, could birch be used for butter-boxes?—I could not say. As long as the timber does not taint the butter I see no objection to it.

10. *Mr. Murdoch.*] As to the present waste of white-pine, would it matter if the cases were made of different sizes of timber?—If we had a "white" box it might not matter. The tops and bottoms would have to be in one piece, but perhaps two pieces would do at the sides if they were properly fastened. We can use a lot of the timber that is at present rejected for the local trade, reserving the best for the export trade.

11. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Do you think they get more knocking about on the sea voyage than in the railway-trucks here?—No. Once on the boat they get very little knocking about. The worst handling is out of the trucks into the steamer.

FAIRLIE, SATURDAY, 15TH MARCH, 1913

ROBERT LINDSAY BANKS sworn and examined. (No. 14.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Banks?—I am the engineer to the Mackenzie County Council, and my headquarters are at Fairlie.

2. Has your Council done much tree-planting?—Yes. Some of the trees in our plantations, which you would see as you came along, were planted in 1882, but they were not planted close enough to lose the side branches, having been planted from 9 ft. to 10 ft. apart. A lot of the planting done by the County Council in the old days has been practically lost through the mixed planting.

3. *Mr. Adams.*] I suppose you planted *Pinus insignis* with the others?—Yes, and they choked them; the *Pinus* growing so quickly crowded the others out.

4. With that exception the others have kept pace with one another?—Yes.

5. *Mr. Clarke.*] What was the effect of planting *Pinus Laricio*?—We did not spend any money on them. We found it the easiest to plant *Pinus pinaster*.

6. *The Chairman.*] What is the age of the larches at Lake Tekapo?—About fifteen years. We started planting there in 1893, but I do not think any survived.

7. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Have any been cut down by frosts?—No, but we lost a lot of *insignis* down here. That lake never freezes; it is always above 32°.

8. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] How many do you plant a year?—We spend about £100 a year in planting, and get the work done for £6 a thousand, including the trees. There is no guarantee. With a guarantee the cost would be about £10.

9. *The Chairman.*] How many do you plant to the acre at £6 per thousand?—8 ft. apart they would run 680 to the acre, but we have been planting them closer, and now they run from 1,000 to 1,500 to the acre. We have planted out 100,000 3 ft. apart.

10. Do the nurserymen plant them out for £6?—Yes, and the cost of the fencing is outside that. We pay £1 a chain for rabbit-proof fencing. The County Council asked the Government some years ago to take over the planting of this county, and do the work on a bigger scale, because it is a treeless district, but we did not succeed.

11. *Mr. Adams.*] Have you some good reserves?—Yes, there were a lot set aside for planting purposes in Mr. Baker's time as Commissioner, and we get rents from them, which are spent in further planting.

12. *The Chairman.*] What terms are those reserves leased for?—I think, by the year.

13. *Mr. Adams.*] What is the quality of the land?—The best to be got there, the reserves being picked out on account of the land.

14. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Is there any Crown land adjacent to those reserves?—They are Crown lands held on lease.

15. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Are they on the flat?—Some are on the flat, and some on the low-lying hills.