

## JOHN DRYDEN HALL sworn and examined. (No. 25.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you, Mr. Hall?—A farmer, residing at Hororata. I wish to call the attention of the Commission to a plantation reserve, No. 1763, in the Selwyn Survey District, on the Dunsandel-Hororata Road, on which there is now growing a dense growth of silver-wattles which have spread to the adjoining lands and are causing considerable damage to them. If the Commissioners were to see how useless this reserve is, and were to ascertain how expensive it will be to clear it and to plant it with desirable trees, I think they would be able to form some conclusion as to the undesirability of planting silver-wattles elsewhere. I own the adjoining land, and have cleared the wattles that had spread to it. The Plantation Board at my request dug a ditch, 4 by 3, to prevent the spread of the plants, and it has been successful. The plantation harbours rabbits, and in the present state is of no use to the district.

2. Do you consider the silver-wattle a noxious weed?—That is a strong term. It may be useful for some purpose, but in the interests of the farming community it is a bad plant to grow. I would like to get a remedy that would destroy it. The plantation consists of 100 acres, and I would pay 5s. rental an acre for the land cleared, but now it is useless.

3. Have you any other point to advance?—I suggest that all Crown leases should contain a covenant binding the tenant to plant in certain places if considered necessary suitable trees or seeds to be supplied by the Government. You can get at the Crown tenant and compel him to do certain things which are for his ultimate benefit.

4. What about future leases of the same property?—If the matter were put before the Crown tenant in the same way as it would be put before any ordinary farmer, and he were convinced of the benefit he would derive from the shelter—I speak as a farmer—he would spend a small sum not only in planting, but in taking care of the trees afterwards. Canterbury is conspicuous for absence of method in devising shelter plantations for the protection of stock. The plantations made by the Selwyn County Council are of great benefit, no doubt, to the whole district, but they would have acted very much better if they had been cut into L shapes, with little clumps and corners, rather than have been arranged in big strips.

5. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Would you advocate the planting of public roads?—The difficulty there is that if you plant the south-west side you shelter the stock but shade the road.

6. If you used deciduous trees you would not shade the road?—There are deciduous trees in the Riccarton Bush, and they form a case in support of what I say.

7. Have you tried *Salix salmonii*, a quick-growing willow?—No.

8. *The Chairman.*] Is there any other point?—One more: that information should be imparted to persons proposing to plant trees as to whether or not such trees will harbour birds. The diffidence that exists on the part of the Canterbury farmer to making plantations is the fear that they will prove a harbour for birds that will decimate his crops. I do not think he is justified in that conclusion, but it leads to a lack of energy in respect to tree-planting which is not creditable or desirable. My father planted many acres, and where they were of large size—the County Council plantations are 10 chains wide—they proved a great harbour for birds; but later on when he planted four rows deep in L shape there was no serious trouble with the birds.

9. They were purely for shelter purposes?—Yes.

10. You are interested in the dairy industry?—Yes.

11. And plantations would assist that by affording shelter to the stock?—Yes. I think the plantations of Mr. Bealey's were some of the first of deciduous trees in Canterbury. They consist of oaks, ash, elms, willows; but the inclination of the present-day farmer is to get the trees out and put grass in.

12. Do you know if any experiments have been made in this district with a view to testing other timber than white-pine as to its use for butter-boxes?—We get our timber from Southland for cheese-crates. We use the white-pine. I think the National Dairy Association stipulate that that timber must be used.

13. The tainting difficulty would not come in in the case of cheese-crates as it does in the case of butter-boxes?—No. Cheese does not absorb nearly as readily as butter. The cheese industry is much more likely to expand than the butter, as it does not require cool storage, like butter. I think it is quite possible that other timbers might be used almost entirely for cheese-crates.

## RICHARD GEORGE ROBINSON sworn and examined. (No. 26.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are the Chief Nurseryman for the South Island under the Lands Department?—Yes.

2. At what do you estimate the cost of planting an acre with forest trees at 4 ft. apart, including the raising of the trees?—In computing cost of and the anticipated returns from our afforestation labours a vast amount of speculative matter requires to be presented. The following information will serve to show at a glance the actual average expenditure per acre now incurred in raising trees and establishing a plantation. No provision is made for the initial value of the land or buildings, and the fencing item is based on the assumption that an area of about 1,000 acres is being afforested:—Nursery work: Initial expenses in formation of nursery, 1s. 3d.; tree-seed cost, 2s. 9d.; seed-sowing, 5d.; tending one- and two-year-old seedlings, 11d.; lifting and lining-out seedlings, 2s. 2d.; tending lined-out seedlings, 3s. 8d.; lifting and bundling for plantations, 3s. 6d.; transport of trees, 5d.; tools, implements, repairs, &c., 3d.; general maintenance work, 1s. 9d.; supervision, 6d.: cost of raising 1,000 trees for plan-