

fenced, but there was no arrangement made. Something was said about fencing the half-chain road.

69. They did not say whether you were to fence it or not?—No.

70. It has been suggested that this section would make an excellent bee-farm—this $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres?—Yes.

71. Is there any other land about the district that could be used for bee-farms?—Yes. A gentleman, Mr. Rentoul, who wanted a bee-farm, took sixty bee-hives out to Parnassus last Friday, where he has land. He had given up any idea of using this $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres as a bee-farm. This ground is not suitable for bees—it is not a favourable place for bees.

72. Is that your opinion?—Yes, it is my opinion too.

73. That it is not a good place for bees?—A man might keep a couple of hives, but not any number.

74. Suppose you lose the right to use this $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land, will you have any difficulty in making a living out of the rest of your land?—Yes. I reckon it will make a difference of from £25 to £30 to me. It will reduce my profits to that extent—perhaps £20. All I have now is the profit from 308 ewes, and we sell them as stores.

75. *Mr. Anderson.*] I have heard it said that you are a very wealthy man: is that true?—No, I am not a very wealthy man. I should like to know how that got about.

76. How many acres of land have you at Cheviot?—320 acres: no other land but this.

77. Are there any larger sections on the Cheviot Estate than that?—Oh, yes, Mr. Forbes's. He has got two sections. He has about 1,800 acres.

78. *Mr. Forbes.*] Mr. Forbes has not got as much lease-in-perpetuity land as you have, has he? I have 220 acres lease in perpetuity, and I have a lease, coming to an end in three years, of all the other land that I hold?—You have had that 1,500 acres for twenty-one years or so.

79. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Is your's a leasehold property?—Lease in perpetuity.

80. *Mr. Anderson.*] You are not a large landowner?—No.

81. You own no land anywhere else?—No.

82. It is wrong to say you are either a wealthy man or a large landowner?—It is very wrong. It is quite untrue.

83. There are many holders of land in Cheviot with more land than you have got?—Yes, there are fifty—one hundred perhaps—larger sections than mine.

84. *Mr. Witty.*] I think you wrote to the Minister of Lands with regard to this section?—Yes, I did.

85. You were willing to pay an increased rent for that land?—Yes.

86. You had occupied it for eighteen years?—Yes.

87. But it was on a yearly tenancy?—Yes.

88. Therefore you were liable to lose it at the end of any year?—Yes.

89. Without notice?—Yes.

90. You say that Mr. Sidney Smith was a great friend of Mr. Gibson?—Yes.

91. How do you know?—It is common knowledge. I know it. I met him the day he went out to Gibson's, and he stayed there from the Saturday to the Monday. I met him coming back.

92. Do you think he had been sleeping there: he had been staying with Mr. Gibson?—That was just about the time I discovered that this was taking place.

93. Then Mr. Smith cannot go to Mr. Gibson's without its concerning Mr. Holton?—I do not say that; but he was out there. He is a great friend of his, and has been for many years.

94. Is there any objection to Mr. Smith and Mr. Gibson being friends?—No, no objection.

95. Then you think they could not meet together without discussing this little section of your's?—No, I cannot say what they did; but I know they did meet.

96. But you do not know, except by your own imagination, that they were discussing your section?—Yes, I put two and two together in that case. I do not know whether I am right about it.

97. You are a bit suspicious?—Yes.

98. You also wrote to the Prime Minister to tell him that one of your neighbours was a nuisance—Mr. Ashworth?—He has been for a good many years.

99. Was it a fair thing to write up to the Prime Minister to bother him with a little petty grievance about your neighbour?—That was one of the documents. I sent that, I think, to the Land Board.

Mr. Witty: This is to the Minister of Lands.

Hon. Mr. Massey: Documents addressed to the Minister of Lands go to the Lands Department.

Witness: It was sent up here as one of the documents. I heard that Mr. Sidney Smith was trying to get the rest of this section for Mr. Ashworth.

100. *Mr. Witty.*] How much land has Mr. Ashworth?—I suppose about 40 acres. He lives on a freehold section of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres; he has the Limekiln Reserve of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres; he has a reserve from the Port Robinson Domain Board of about 9 or 10 acres; and he has a section at Port Robinson, opposite the school, of about 22 acres.

101. How long has he had that?—About six months.

102. Then at the time you wrote this letter to the Minister of Lands he had not got that?—No.

103. He had got only about $10\frac{1}{2}$ acres?—Fourteen or fifteen.

104. Seeing that you had 310, do you not think he had as much right to try and get that land as you had?—But he is not a farmer.

105. Were you always a farmer?—No, not always.

106. Then why did you take up land?—Well, I did not think it was nice of him to try and get that away from me.