

17. If you were making a revision of the county, would you raise the valuation of the poor land in the same percentage as you would the good land?—Unless there was something to warrant it, I would not. You could not put a 5-per-cent. advance on land unconditionally.

18. If you found it necessary under altered conditions to raise the value of good land 100 per cent., would you consider it necessary to raise the value of the poor land by the same percentage?—No.

19. Is it not a fact that very poor land is not as much sought after to-day as it was ten or fifteen years ago?—That is so. People want good properties if they can get them to-day. They shy off inferior properties.

20. Have you ever known an instance where the increases that have taken place in regard to poor land barely cover the cost of the improvements on it?—Yes. Poor land in some cases does not appreciate. For instance, the Land Purchase Board bought a piece of land eight miles from Masterton, and have practically given the same price for it that the late owner gave about ten years ago.

21. Do you know of any such properties in the Castlepoint County?—There are some such properties in the North Riding.

22. What price did Buick's land bring?—Very much the same as he gave for it.

23. In what riding in the Castlepoint County is Buick's land and the Loan and Mercantile property situated?—The North Riding.

24. Do you know of any properties in the South Riding which could be bought at the same price to-day as was given for them eighteen years ago?—No; they have gone up very much.

25. Would it be safe to say that the South Riding contains the cream of the land in the county?—I think so.

26. Is it a fact that the South Riding is the only part of the county that has a good outlet?—It has the finest road outlet, and the finest schools, and all the rest.

27. Has it a mail-service too?—Yes, and a delivery of goods from the Masterton storekeepers as far as the Langdale Settlement.

28. How is the North Riding off for formed roads?—Very badly off—that is, within its own boundaries.

29. How would you describe the class of land in the North Riding?—Generally as hilly country and scrub. There are patches of good land, but the bulk of it is poor.

30. Would you expect much increase in value as between 1907 and 1913?—No; it does not appreciate like the better class of country.

31. What defects has it got?—It has bad access for one thing, and it is hilly country. It is costly to get roads into it, too.

32. Is the land in the East Riding of a somewhat similar character to that of the North Riding?—There is some better land in the East Riding.

33. Is there a great proportion of poor land?—There is a big proportion of poor land.

34. Would you describe the West Riding as containing a portion of good grazing-land served by only one road?—That is right.

35. How many miles further from the railway is the West Riding than the South Riding?—I should say twelve to fifteen miles, the extreme end of it.

36. Are you aware of the values assigned to the lands in the recent valuation?—I have seen them.

37. Taking into consideration the general character of the country, its road access and general conveniences, do you consider the unimproved values are generally uniform?—Yes. I went into facts. I took the sheep returns of the South Riding and the unimproved value of the riding, and I took the sheep grazing in the remainder of the county and the unimproved value of that, and worked it out. The carrying-capacity of the South Riding is little better than a sheep and a half to the acre. If you go further and work out the absolute value you will find that the unimproved value as fixed runs out at £3 3s. 6d. per sheep in the South Riding and about £3 1s. in the balance of the county.

38. That is, estimating it on the carrying-capacity as given in the stock returns?—Yes.

39. *Mr. Ryder.*] Have you ever been over the Annedale property?—No.

40. Have you inspected it?—I have not been all over it.

41. Have you valued it?—No.

42. Have you inspected the properties in the other ridings?—I have been on some of them.

43. Do you know where the boundaries are in the various ridings?—Generally speaking, I could pick them out. I do not pose as an expert who knows all the properties.

44. Do you know where the boundaries of the Annedale Estate are, and what riding the whole of the estate is in?—In the West Riding, I take it.

45. Do you know where the boundary of the North Riding is?—Yes, from Whakatake. I have taken the South Riding as one portion and the others as a whole, and not individualized them in position. I am not conversant with the boundaries of the individual ridings.

46. You have given an estimate of the carrying-capacity of the South Riding as compared with that of the other ridings, and you say it works out fairly well. I want to know if you know the boundaries of the various ridings. The West Riding is worth double the other two ridings, and it is necessary you should be able to cut out the West Riding before making a fair comparison of the carrying-capacity of the West Riding?—I understand from the prayer of the petitioners that the valuation of the balance of the county is not uniform with the valuation placed on the South Riding, and therefore, in going into the question in order to give evidence here, I did not individualize any properties, but took the whole of the remainder of the county which the petitioners were objecting to; and that is the line I prepared myself on for evidence.

47. *The Chairman.*] You did give evidence as to some property—the Loan and Mercantile's. Do you know that that is in the North Riding?—Yes.