

30. Did you know the old value of Mr. French's property?—No.
31. You do not know the sale price?—I have forgotten. He told me about it, and I told him I thought he had a good thing.
32. You did not know it was 111 per cent. more than the roll-value?—No.
33. You know the values generally assigned to the properties in the South Riding of Castlepoint County?—Yes.
34. What do you think of them?—I think, if anything, the South Riding comes best out of it.
35. Do you think the South Riding is undervalued?—If anything, it is.
36. *The Chairman.*] You say it is the fault of the Councillors of the riding if they do not get the riding rate to their taste?—My contention is that you strike a rate to suit your own requirements, and therefore if the South Riding can do with a half-penny or the three-farthings rate it does not matter to them what the valuation of the other ridings is.
37. Will the Act allow Councillors to have whatever rate they like?—They are bound to spend the riding rates in the riding. What I have said does not apply where there is a main road going through the county.
38. *Mr. Ryder.*] You know that in this county we have declared a certain road to be a main road?—I did not know of it.
39. As Chairman of the Masterton County, how would you say a road declared to be a main road would be maintained?—Out of the general rates of the whole county.
40. What other expenditure comes out of the general rate?—Office expenses, engineering, hospital and charitable aid, cost of preparing the rolls, &c. But all the rates on the riding must be spent within the riding.
41. What do you mean by that?—Maintenance and new works.
42. Where have you made valuations in this county?—At Castlepoint.
43. I want the properties. If you give the price I will pick the properties?—I do not think it is right that I should give the information. Castlepoint was valued for the Government, and is different.
44. You decline to answer the question?—Yes.
- The Chairman.* Then, of course, we cannot take any notice of his evidence that he has made valuations at Castlepoint. Evidence not subject to cross-examination is not evidence at all.
45. *Mr. Ryder.*] Do you think you could value a property without inspecting it?—No, not to do justice to the estate. A general idea could be given.
46. Could a Government valuer give a valuation without inspecting the property?—No.
47. If hilly country in this district produces fat lambs, would you consider it good or indifferent country, or what?—It depends on how the land is stocked.
48. Can you fatten lambs on native grass?—Yes, I have seen good lambs come off native-grass country.
49. Would you consider that you could produce fat lambs off native-grass country?—Not generally: certain seasons you could.
50. How do you consider it for fattening bullocks?—Not profitable.
51. Were you at the big cattle-sale in Masterton a few months ago?—No.
52. You perhaps read in the papers that some of a mob of fat cattle that came off a certain estate in this riding brought £14 per head?—I saw the report; they were four years old.
53. They were three years old. Would you consider it good hill country to produce that?—Yes, if they were fat.
54. The steers out of the same mob brought £11. Did you see that?—No.
55. You consider hilly country that produced fat lambs good country in this district?—Yes.
56. And country that produces fat bullocks off the hills you consider good country?—Yes.
57. You know the ridings of the district?—Fairly well.
58. Do you know the road to Castlepoint?—Yes. Although I have been over the other main roads, I cannot say that I know them. It is twenty years ago since I first went out by the Castlepoint Road.
59. What was the road like then?—Fairly bad in some places.
60. What was it like ten years ago?—Slightly improved.
61. What was it like seven years ago?—I was not over it seven years ago. I was over it eighteen months ago, and it cost me a new set of tires.
62. Was that on account of the metal?—It was on account of the Castlepoint metal.
63. Do you know the Whakatoke?—Yes.
64. How many years ago was the road made down there?—We had to go that way the first time; the second time we took the road instead of the creek.
65. The whole of the road from Tinui to Castlepoint is good?—To-day it is good for a country road.
66. And has been so for many years?—Yes. The county roads are very decent, but the trouble is that you practically only have two roads.
67. You are aware that practically all the properties abut on the one road?—That is so.
68. And there is no necessity for other roads?—Not as the land is held to-day, in blocks. The properties can be worked with the roads as at present.
69. Do you consider that the settlers holding the land as they do to-day have not sufficient roads?—For the properties in their present state I should say the roads were sufficient. They can get their stock away, and in the summer months their produce.
70. What would you say was the difference in the cost of shipping a bale of wool at Wellington from the East Riding and from the South Riding?—I should say there would be very little.
71. Do you not think that wool could be shipped to Wellington just as cheaply from the West Riding as from the South?—I should say not. The cartage over the Whakatane Hill has to be considered.