

47. Something of that kind will probably be required in this case?—Yes.

48. And we must leave that to experts?—Yes.

49. You have suggested that the farmers could do their own cartage with their own teams?—Yes.

50. Well, we have had a number of farmers who have been called who said that they have found it does not pay to use their own teams for cartage of their produce, for the reason that just about the time they want to do the cartage they can better employ their teams in ploughing and preparing the land for the autumn sowing: what do you say to that?—I know many farmers that simply keep their grain till they have finished ploughing, and then do the carting. The Sandon farmers to-day and ten years ago are totally different.

51. Are you speaking of ten years ago?—Yes, and twenty years ago. They will all have motor-lorries within a short time. They have all got motor-cars now.

52. I want to point out to you a matter which you may perhaps have overlooked—namely, that now in the Sandon district those farms are being constantly cultivated?—Yes.

53. They have to prepare the winter feed as well as growing their grain and other products?—Yes.

54. And I presume you would not deny the evidence of the farmers who say that they can now more profitably employ their teams than in carting?—I do not deny that, but the position is this: that during the last few years and during the war more grain has been grown. It has been borne out by facts in this way: that the Sandon farmers get as much for their grain as they do at Marton.

55. We know that there is a strip of land more or less varying in width of sandy country adjacent to the sea-coast in the Rangitikei and Manawatu County?—Yes.

56. That strip is broader in the Manawatu County than in the Rangitikei County?—There is a large area in the Rangitikei County.

57. There is an area of land beyond the sandhills which consists of sandy grass-covered dunes intersected by flat valleys between ridges?—Little sandy swamps.

58. I refer to the country outside the sandy country?—Yes.

59. And there is a considerable area which consists of well-grassed sand ridges intersected by flats?—Yes; that is the Oroua Downs. If you are dealing with Dalrymple's homestead block, which is north of the river, yes.

60. I am dealing with a considerable area of land of which Sir James Wilson spoke?—Yes; what you say about that is quite right.

61. Sir James Wilson says that the flats which divide the ridges are capable of growing most excellent root and rape crops?—Yes.

62. And that a good deal of that country, as it possesses good water, is capable of dairy-farming?—Yes.

63. Do you agree with that?—Yes, under certain conditions.

64. And water is easily obtainable?—Yes; but that does not affect the railway, because it is impossible for that land to be of any interest to the tramway.

65. Because you say the roads run towards Marton. Is there not a good road running from Wilson Bros.' homestead into Bull's?—Wilson Bros. would never go to Bull's with grain—they would go to Bonny Glen.

66. Is there not a good road running from Bull's to the Wilson Estate?—Yes, and a big hill.

67. The Oroua Downs land has turned out better than was anticipated, has it not?—Yes, thanks to basic slag.

68. Is it not a fact that the farmers in this district are becoming more and more accustomed to the use of manures?—They have to make a living the same as at Waikato.

69. But farming is a progressive science—It does not remain stationary?—No.

70. And is it not a fact that the farmers in the Sandon district are becoming more accustomed to the use of manures?—Yes; they have always used manures, but not at Oroua Downs. The land at Oroua Downs has to be well farmed to grow grain.

71. Do you know that some farmers in the Sandon district told us they were compelled to burn their oaten chaff?—They are well off—they do not care; but no good farmer will burn good oaten straw.

72. I wonder how you know all these things?—It might be Mr. Perritt. He had some oat stacks that had been wet. They were there for five years to my knowledge, and he burnt them the other day because it was wet and old; he would not burn them otherwise. They feed their stock with it. No man with any sense would burn it.

73. Not unless he could not find a market for it?—He would feed his stock with it.

74. You discredit entirely the evidence?—No good farmer will burn his oaten straw unless it is so old and wet that it is no good keeping it.

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EDMUND GOODBEHERE sworn and examined. (No. 40.)

1. *Mr. Innes.*] What are you?—A land agent and valuer residing at Feilding and carrying on business there, now and for the last thirty-five years.

2. You know the Manawatu County and the Kairanga County very well?—I know the whole district—the Manawatu, Oroua, and KIWITEA—fairly intimately, because I have done a good deal of valuing there.

3. You know the present tram-line from Himatangi to Sanson?—Yes.

4. You are here to represent the Feilding Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.