

to inspect the grassland at Benhopai, and later proceeded to Clarence Bridge in order to hold a meeting. On the 4th June the sub-committee of the Commission held public sittings respectively at Cheviot and Clarence Bridge, and then proceeded to Christchurch, where the next day a general committee meeting was held. On the 7th June your Commission held a public sitting in Oamaru, there being present amongst others Mr. D. Sutherland, whose experience dates back for many years. The next day a public sitting was held at Palmerston South, and a considerable amount of interesting evidence was given. Here Mr. A. S. Orbell appeared, who at present occupies part of the country originally taken up by his father. The same day your Commission proceeded to Dunedin. The next day a public sitting was held in Dunedin, and, this being concluded, your Commission adjourned till the 14th June. On the 14th June a final sitting was held in Dunedin, one or two witnesses examined, and various matters gone into in committee. It is interesting to note that one of the witnesses was Mr. Watson Shennan, whose occupation of pastoral country in Otago dates from 1857. On the 15th June your Commission commenced preparing the rough draft of the report. On the next day Messrs. Scott, McInnes, and Murray proceeded to Alexandra, via Roxburgh, in order to procure further information regarding irrigation, and for Mr. Murray to become conversant with the depleted areas of Central Otago. The remaining members of your Commission remained in Dunedin preparing the rough draft of the report. The following day, 17th June, the sub-committee in Central Otago first visited Mr. Barker's farm and inquired further into his method of dry farming, then proceeded to inspect the upper Clutha Valley, visiting the country on both sides of the Clutha, Tarras, Northburn, and spending the night at Cromwell. The next day they proceeded to Naseby by way of the Galloway experimental plantation, Lauder (where Mr. John Wilson was interviewed in regard to his methods of irrigating grassland—he having had thirty years' experience in this work both with miners' water and with clear water), Ophir, and the Poolburn (Ida) Valley. An informal sitting was held at Moa Creek. On the 19th June the travelling sub-committee proceeded from Naseby via Puketoi to Linburn Bridge, on the western part of the Maniototo Plain, and thence to Dunedin by way of Patearoa, Waipiata, Pigroot, Dunback, and Palmerston South. Those of the party who had known the country at an earlier date were pleased to note how it had improved from about Kyeburn onwards to Dunback. On the 21st June your Commission as a whole assembled at the Lands Office, Dunedin, and commenced revising the provisional report. On the 22nd and 23rd June your Commission continued to work on the report. On the 24th June the report was completed and the final meeting of your Commission held.

In the compilation of our report we have attempted to be as brief as possible, but every subject in the order of reference has received our most earnest consideration. The details of our inspection of the pastoral lands, as already given, is supplemented by the accompanying map,* which shows not only the actual route of your Commission, but also other places in the South Island visited at one time or another by its members.

Coming now to the various questions on which we were instructed to inquire, we beg to report as follows :—

PART I.—THE TENURE.

Under the above term, "the tenure," we are dealing with sections (1), (2), (3), and (4) of the order of reference. At the same time certain of our conclusions have been reached by a careful consideration of the details concerning sections (5), (6), and (8), to be seen in Part II of this report.

Two general principles have guided us in coming to our conclusions. These, briefly stated, are: (1) That the tenure must in every detail be such that all rights of the tenant be respected compatible with the best interests of the State; and (2) that the tenure shall not only deal with the occupation of the Crown lands and with other matters to which this leads, but shall also be so constructed that the tenant will be encouraged in every way possible to improve his holding, and to bring it into as high a state of efficiency and productivity as is possible

* Not published with this report.