

20. And you find something to do all the time from half past 5 till 7 p.m.?—Yes, and even then cannot keep up with the work on the place.

21. Do you consider the people employed on a farm need to be as skilled or are as skilled as the waterside worker or the casual hands employed in the freezing-works?—Much more so. The farm hand would be useless if he did not know more.

22. You think the men employed on farms are just as much entitled to get the same wage as the waterside worker or the freezing company's casual hands?—Yes. They have dirtier work to do, and in wet weather they have to go out and milk, and feed the calves and pigs, go to the factory, and to possess a knowledge of stock. There is a lot more to learn in connection with farming than there is about the work on the wharf. The milking and attending to the cattle has to be done at regular hours.

23. Apparently you do not get much overtime for the hours you work?—It depends on what you call overtime.

24. I mean payment for overtime?—If you look at my balance-sheet you will see I am carrying on at a loss.

25. *Mr. McCombs.*] I am still up against that problem of how a going concern showing a loss of £319 per annum can possibly be sold at the valuation alleged. On what basis do people buy land—do they pay the bigger the price the bigger the loss?—I suppose they are looking forward to the time when we will get an open market. While the war was on our produce was taken at a price, and we unanimously submitted to it because we thought we were helping our boys at the front. Now the war is over I consider our produce should go on the open market the same as anybody else's. Why should we be penalized as a body of men? I consider we work longer and harder than other members of the community.

26. At what price did you produce butterfat in 1914—before the war?—We were getting about 1s. 1d., and we were better off than we are at the present time.

27. And during the war period, what price?—About 1s. 7½d. or 1s. 8d. per pound. It went up gradually, and very slowly at first.

28. When you make a loss at 1s. 8d., which was 7½d. more than you were getting in pre-war days, where did the extra expense come in?—To begin with, all that we required on the farm jumped up by leaps and bounds. Articles such as wire, iron, and paint went up enormously. A neighbour of mine painted his house the other day at a cost of £100, and before the war I painted one for £22. For four bolts I had to pay 9s. 6d., and I could have got them before the war for 4d.

29. Do you think the farmers generally anticipated a rise in 1916, and that this year the export price of butter would be 2s. 6d.?—They did not anticipate anything. We were fighting and struggling on, hoping for the best. We did not know but what the Germans would not be here now.

30. Then you did not continue the loss of £419 per annum in the anticipation of a rise in the near future?—We were hanging on. If you are on the land you are tied there, and we appear to be at the mercy of the unionists.

31. Do you not think your disability was the disability of the high land-values?—Certainly the land-value has gone up, but why I do not know. I suppose they reckoned that when we got an open market there would be a scarcity of food all over the world, and the price of produce would go up.

32. *Mr. Powdrell.*] Is it not a fact that the high price ruling for land is due oftentimes to the opportunity given by the seller of the land to the purchaser to get on the land with very little capital?—Very often.

33. And due to a false idea that there is a fortune in dairying?—I believe that is so. The purchasers are let in on too small a deposit. People get in thinking it is a good thing, but they fall in. Many of the returned soldiers going on the land are going to be off it in eighteen months. If they have no capital they go on improved farms at £50 an acre. They lose the little money they have got, and will have to come out with nothing. There is nothing surer. I have been farming all my life and know what I am talking about.

34. You think that the returned soldier going on the land with no labour except at the present prices will not be able to make a do of it?—He cannot unless we get 2s. 8d. for butterfat. He will be off the land in eighteen months.

35. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] It is generally admitted that what the average farmer makes goes into the land?—Yes, that is his bank. He has very little in the other bank.

36. It is his life-work which goes into the land, and all he gets out of it during the years he has been on it is his keep?—Yes, that is practically all, and he looks to the land going up in value to give him what he has to give to his children.

37. The increase in the value of the land is practically all the farmers are making out of the land?—Yes; most of them have an overdraft at the bank.

38. You will admit that in a great many cases, as your statement shows, a man has to throw in his own labour or not get interest back on the capital invested?—Yes.

39. And if he gets interest on his capital invested he gets nothing for his labour?—That is exactly as I stand. If I got interest on my capital I would get nothing for myself. I made my place. I bought in a cheap market, and my labour is in the farm. If I got interest on my capital I would have no wages. If I sold out and did nothing I would get a better living by investing my capital than I am getting at the present time with working thirteen hours a day.

40. *The Chairman.*] You would have accumulated your labour in the past and got it in one sum?—Yes.

41. *Mr. Powdrell.*] Do you go to the pictures with your family?—Never. I do not believe in them.

42. Do you go to races?—No, I have never had a bet in my life. I take an interest in public life and am connected with three public bodies. I enjoy public life, and like to see my children get a good education and learn music.

43. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] I suppose the reason why the farmer accumulates money is because he lives cheaply and does not spend his money?—Yes. I grow the potatoes and vegetables that I require to keep myself employed during the milking, and also kill my own meat. I also buy store sheep and keep them till they are fat. I can live at half the rate that the people in the towns live, and I live as well and better than the people in the towns.

44. It does not cost so much for pocket-money for the man on the farm as for the man in the town?—No.