

6. You say that the Matamata land was owned by the State. Is that still owned by the State? Did they subdivide it?—They subdivided it; it was put under the Land-settlement Act, but since then they have been able to freehold it.

7. Has the State much of that land now?—I could not say.

8. When you spoke of the rainfall being suitable, did you refer to the Matamata district?—No, at Rotorua and Taupo.

9. The Commission received evidence upon that, that it was a drawback. What is the average rainfall there? Is it up to the average of New Zealand, or is it above it or below it?—I think it is quite up to the average. In our own Rotorua district we have a good rainfall, rather above the average.

10. Now, how is the land watered—for stock, for ploughing, and other farming?—Some parts are fairly well watered.

11. Generally speaking, do you consider it well watered?—Yes.

12. What is the average amount of fertilizer per acre required for that land?—3 cwt. for crops or grass. I do not think you should put less on it.

13. *Mr. Massey.*] Can you tell us the cost of bringing this land into production?—I estimate that it would cost £7 per acre, excluding buildings but including fences. That would bring it into a pasture state, and then it should carry a cow to 2½ acres.

14. That is about £20 per cow?—Yes, £17 10s. to £20 per cow.

15. And how much for sheep?—Well, you could take about five or six sheep to a cow.

16. How does this land compare with Tokoroa land?—It is very similar.

17. Have you ever bored for water in the Taupo district?—No.

18. How many acres are there within the pumice area?—Excluding the forestry area, I estimate it at about 1,000,000 acres.

19. Who owns that?—The Natives and the Crown.

20. In what proportions?—I have no idea.

21. *Mr. Samuel.*] How does this pumice area compare with the land you own yourself at Ngongotaha?—It is very similar. In our district the land in native state was mostly in tutu and fern; in the Taupo district it is in tutu, fern, tussock, and manuka.

22. This country, in your opinion, would cost no more to work than the land round Rotorua?—No, providing it had railway access it would cost no more.

23. And in your opinion, with proper treatment the Taupo country would give the same results as the Rotorua country?—Yes.

24. You have been farming for how long at Ngongotaha?—Thirty years.

25. When you went there your place was in the rough?—Yes. I might say that when I first went to the Rotorua district I with my brother took up 800 acres of bush country at Mamaku. We broke that in, but we found that it was not healthy for stock there.

26. *The Chairman.*] There was bush-sickness there?—Yes, and then we acquired land outside the bush area near Rotorua, to work in with this other land. We developed a considerable area of this fern and tutu country, and we still have this bush country. We found it handy to have it, to work when breaking in the open country. Now I am living outside, and dairying and grazing, and still utilizing the bush country.

27. *Mr. Samuel.*] You consider that with the same facilities you could do equally well with the Taupo country?—I do not see any reason why I should not.

28. And you are recognized as a fair judge of the value of land?—Well, yes, perhaps so.

29. Do you ever do any valuing?—Yes, a considerable amount.

30. Do you ever do any for the Government?—Yes. I was chairman of the Eastern Revaluation Committee for returned soldiers, and I have also done valuing for banks, solicitors, and the Government for a period of fifteen years.

31. *Mr. Lye.*] The proposed railway-line does not serve Tokoroa, does it?—No, the range divides that land from Taupo; it is fifty miles away from Taupo. [Area indicated on map.]

32. The land which the railway will serve—is it similar to the Tokoroa land?—In parts it is. Tokoroa is a plain, practically.

33. With outcropping high land?—Yes.

34. And that outcropping high land is of better quality than the flats?—Yes, in some cases.

35. Are you prepared to admit that around Tokoroa there is a considerable amount of cattle-sickness?—I believe there is.

36. Does that apply to a large area of the country which would be served by this line?—I am not aware of that. I do not know of any cattle-sickness there.

37. Were they troubled with it at Reporoa?—At the first they were troubled with what appeared to be cattle-sickness, but once they began to use fertilizers and got their pastures in proper heart that disappeared.

38. Are you inclined to believe that the use of basic slag will materially reduce any tendency to cattle-sickness?—Naturally it will. The use of slag appears to be beneficial.

39. And you are quite satisfied that the Taupo lands, generally speaking, are really the easiest broken-in land that we have for settlement in the Dominion?—Yes, by a long way. You can break it in very cheaply. You can plough it at any time of the year, and you can put in root crops at any time of the year.

40. With regard to water-supply on that vast area of land, can it be got at a reasonable depth by boring?—I am not aware of that. I have had no experience of it. Of course, there are very large areas in some parts of New Zealand where they have not much water—in the North Island particularly—on two-thirds of the stations. They have to make dams.

41. From what you know of this country, they can get it by boring?—That is so.