

14. Therefore, it would really mean that that part of the country would require a number of farm-implements? That would be a big consideration. It would require harrows, mowers, cultivators, and so on, and that would encourage the farm-implement industry?—Yes, they are all necessary.

15. More so than perhaps in any other portion of the North Island?—Yes. With regard to how the soil improves with age: in this paddock I had down in clover for eight years I ploughed 3 acres and put that area in potatoes, and I took 45 tons of potatoes from those 3 acres—15 tons to the acre. Allowing for the heavy cartage into Rotorua—and it cost £1 a ton—those 3 acres returned to me, net, £316.

16. We are growing potatoes in the South Island for nothing?—South Island farmers would hardly credit what I have said, but those are actual results.

17. However, it would mean a large number of implements would be permanently used?—Yes, it would be necessary to have them.

18. *Mr. Massey.*] What did your country cost per acre to bring in?—Roughly speaking, about £6 to bring into grass off the rough. That is not including fencing or buildings. Fencing would be, roughly, £1 to £1 2s. 6d. per chain, so the total expenditure would depend on the size of the paddock.

19. Am I correct in understanding you to say that, according to your opinion, this land is similar to what the land in Cambridge used to be?—I believe we have hundreds of thousands of acres of similar country.

20. *Mr. Samuel.*] With railway facilities in that part of the country, you, as a young man, would be satisfied to take up a block of land and invest £1,000, and you would be certain you could do well?—I would not hesitate.

21. *The Chairman.*] You state that your place is about fifteen miles from the railway, and it is owing to the cost of getting your produce to the railway that it is not paying?—I did not say that the country was not paying. I said I had to give up growing oats because I found the growing of oats was unprofitable.

22. If you find that fifteen miles is too far away from the railway, do you not think that this proposed railway would limit its benefits to farms that were closer to it?—It would as regards that class of cropping. With potatoes, of course, they would be a profitable undertaking. It all depends on the crop. A farmer is limited now in his system of farming owing to the lack of railway facilities.

23. *Mr. Lye.*] I know Mr. Parsons has done remarkably well at Guthrie. I want to know something about the water-supply. You say, and I believe it is correct, that that land is suitable for close settlement in small areas. Can you tell me anything about the water-supply?—Yes, I can tell you probably a good deal about the water-supply. There are hundreds of thousands of acres adjoining my property that are very well supplied with water.

24. By way of boring?—Creeks and springs.

25. There is a large area of this pumice country that is not served by running streams. Is water to be had reasonably cheaply by boring?—My experience is that it goes down to a certain level, and there you will find water everywhere. I have been out with water-diviners, and they say that they can locate water all over the country. It seems to me to percolate down to certain strata.

26. Do you know of any cattle-stations and runs that are practically abandoned to-day in the pumice areas?—I must confess I do not know of one.

27. I have forgotten the name of one not far from Putaruru. I was there recently, and, to my amazement, I saw grass a foot high with no stock on it. I got the information that that was land that had been top-dressed, and it would be folly to put stock on the grass because the cattle would become sick?—I believe there is cattle-sickness in parts of Tokoroa, which is caused through the want of water.

28. It is absolutely essential that you should use fertilizers?—Yes, it is essential.

29. Is it correct to say that some of that pumice country has been farmed with little or no success for fifty or sixty years, but that that is due to a failure to use fertilizers?—I think that might apply to districts possibly about Putaruru and Tokoroa, but I think there are none of the farms in the district that would be served for twenty-five or thirty miles on either side that have been farmed and abandoned. I do not know of any. The Putaruru district, although the country is similar in one way, is well over fifty miles away from this district.

30. Then you are quite confident that with small holdings and the use of the plough and fertilizers the country can unquestionably be brought in. Do paspalum and lucerne do very well?—Lucerne does very well. I do not think our climate suits paspalum. Our winters are too severe for paspalum.

31. Do you consider it is of paramount importance in bringing about closer settlement that the proposed railway-line be built?—I do. I do not see how settlement can take place quickly unless it is built. I do not say that settlement will not take place otherwise; but there is not the slightest doubt that a railway will help.

32. *Mr. Vaile.*] Have you had any experience of farming in other districts?—Yes, I was brought up on a farm in Canterbury, and have farmed in Taranaki and Marlborough.

33. Your experience is not limited, then, to the district you are in now?—No.

34. As a result of your previous experience and your present experience, you are settled in this pumice area, and you intend to remain there?—Yes, I believe it offers greater possibilities than any of the other districts I have known.

35. I think you are managing director and chairman of directors of the Rotorua Dairy Factory?—Yes.

36. Have you any land that will be increased in value by the construction of this railway?—I do not think so. I will be no nearer to the proposed railway than I am to Rotorua.