

37. So your opinion is quite unbiased?—Quite unbiased.

38. Have you experienced any difficulty in growing oats and clovers on your place, or have you had uniform success?—I have never had a failure. I have had some crops much better than others, but never what you would call a failure.

39. What has been your best cut of clover hay?—I have got up to 4½ tons of clover hay to the acre.

40. As regards the quality of the produce: do you find these potatoes and other produce of good flavour and quality?—I have not sold a potato in Rotorua this year under the price at which Canterbury potatoes have been sold in Rotorua. My potatoes are bringing to-day £11 10s. a ton—or, rather, that was the price when I left. Of course, the market goes up and down a little.

41. What is your market? Do you buy your fertilizers in Rotorua or in Auckland?—Fertilizers have to come from Auckland.

42. And as to fat stock?—The fat-stock market is in Auckland—at Westfield.

43. What is your estimate of the proportion of land in that area that can readily be ploughed?—I should say 80 to 90 per cent. of the country is ploughable, and up to 75 per cent. is quite easy country.

44. What is the average freight per ton per mile by lorry in your district?—Over 1s. 3d. We pay £1 for fifteen miles.

45. Have you noticed anything in that area in the way of a spread of noxious weeds?—Yes, it seems to me that the spreading of the blackberry is going to be a very serious menace in the future in that part of the country unless it is settled very quickly. I think that a very large area of that part of the country, unless settled within the next ten or fifteen years, will not be worth settling—that is, if the blackberry spreads as it has done in the last ten or fifteen years. There are hundreds of thousands of acres there on which every here and there you can see blackberry coming up where seeds have been lodged by birds. The only solution for dealing with that class of noxious weed is closer settlement.

46. Have you noticed any other weeds?—The ragwort is there. There is a little ragwort all over the country.

47. *Mr. Kyle.*] Is there any Californian thistle?—There is a little, but its growth is very small indeed.

48. *Mr. Makitanara.*] I think that, in reply to a question, you made it quite clear that your place would be no nearer to the proposed railway than it is to Rotorua?—It would be three miles nearer. But it is just as if I lived at the Hutt: I would not stop at Kaiwarra—I would come on into Wellington.

49. You are doing all right?—Yes.

50. Quite satisfied?—Yes.

51. Others could do the same?—I think there are better farms than mine about.

52. Others could do just as well as you?—Yes.

53. *Mr. Massey.*] You could do better if the haulage was cheaper?—Yes. I take up this attitude: although I have not a railway, that is no reason why some one else should not have one.

54. *The Chairman.*] You apparently have done remarkably well, as other witnesses before you have under existing conditions. Would it be of any benefit to you if the railway were constructed as proposed?—No.

55. None at all?—No.

56. From your point of view there is no necessity for the railway?—No, not from my personal point of view.

57. From the point of view of your farm?—My farm could not be benefited by the railway.

58. *Mr. Samuel.*] How far are you from the railway?—Fifteen miles.

59. How far is this Taupo country?—The present proposition is to take the railway about thirty-five to forty miles.

60. How far is the Taupo country from this railway?—Sixty or seventy miles.

61. *The Chairman.*] Would you expect that a railway built on the proposed route would benefit that property fifty or sixty miles away?—No, it would be thirty-five or forty miles nearer.

62. *Mr. Kyle.*] The railway to Taupo would serve that thirty-five to forty miles within a radius of fifteen miles, like the tentacles of an octopus?—Yes.

63. *Mr. Samuel.*] What is the distance from Rotorua to Taupo?—Fifty-six miles. The present Taupo Totara Timber Co.'s tramway is of no use to any of the country, and we suggested two ways to the Waioapu country.

64. *The Chairman.*] Where is this country fifty or sixty miles away?—It lies right up the Waioapu Valley as far as Taupo. Taupo is at the extreme end—fifty-six miles away. Taupo is about fifty-six miles from the present railway.

65. *Mr. Massey.*] Do you know the prison camp at Hautu?—I have never been on it. I have had the officers of it at my place, and they have told me that our country is very similar to that at Hautu. The only difference is, I think, that they are dealing perhaps with more swampy land.

66. Have you any idea of the quality of the stock they send off that farm?—I know they send off tip-top stock. They have topped the Westfield Market.

67. How far away from the rail is the Hautu Prison Farm?—I could not answer that definitely, but probably seventy to eighty miles away, or possibly ninety miles away.

68. If you had a railway to Taupo, it would develop quite a lot of land on the other side of Taupo?—Yes.

69. Have you any idea of the prices realized at the Westfield Market for stock?—I cannot give figures, but I know that at the time the prison-farm authorities were very pleased. They topped the market.