

three years' training for these men before they should be permitted to come here. On that occasion I quoted the case of the Waihi miners who had taken up farming on the Waihi Plains successfully.

95. Before the miners went there people laughed at the idea?—I know, and they laughed at me when I said it could be farmed.

96. Do you attribute a good deal of that cattle-sickness to the poor condition of the land, and that the cattle get a certain amount of pumice?—I do not see how they can help it. What I would say in regard to cattle-sickness is that there is more disease due to bad feed or want of food than to anything else in New Zealand.

97. You think that the cultivation of this land would minimize or wipe out the sickness amongst stock?—Yes, I am sure it would. If you go among farmers in certain districts you will see a certain amount of disease in stock: it is due to the lack of something that the animal wants.

98. Have you been on to the prison farms?—I have been on both of them, and have stayed for days on them, and have examined them thoroughly.

99. Do you think it is possible to do on the rest of the land what has been done on the prison farms?—Yes, I do.

100. Do you think that the cost of putting this land into a state to produce commodities would not be too high?—I think it would not. The manager of the prison farm informed me that he could put that land into grass at £6 per acre, and that it would carry a dairy cow to 2½ acres.

101. *Mr. Samuel.*] You said that in your opinion some of this Taupo land is as good as the Waihi Plains—taking them both in their rough state?—I say it is a good deal better.

102. You do not mean the whole of the Taupo lands?—No, but the great proportion of them.

103. Do you know that the Waihi Plains, since they have been brought under cultivation, have exceeded in output some of the best lands in the Waikato?—Yes, they have; that is quite true. It is due to good farming and enterprise.

104. And in your opinion, with scientific working, and the application of fertilizers, the great majority of the Taupo lands could be made as good as the Waihi Plains land?—Yes, and better.

105. And you think that once we got the whole of the country settled, 50 acres would keep a family?—I do.

106. How many acres do you think are ready for settlement in that area that could be served by the railway within a reasonable distance?—Well, including each side of the railway within twenty-five miles, there is an area of between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 acres.

107. Would you say that 1,000,000 acres could be settled?—I am sure that they could.

108. But not in 50-acre blocks?—No.

109. Well, say 600,000 acres could be settled in, say, twenty years' time, for people to own 50-acre blocks and make a living from them?—Yes.

110. I suppose we can take a family of five, and with 600,000 acres, that would provide for 60,000 people; and if 60,000 people were settled there, that would mean, for every one, two in the city. That would mean 180,000 men settled on the land that would be kept from the produce of the land, and the effect of their labour would be to keep two people in the city?—Yes, approximately.

111. That would be 180,000 souls who would be kept on the produce of that land?—That is so.

112. And you consider that you are quite capable of making this statement owing to your lifetime's knowledge of agriculture, most of it gleaned through editorial work; and your theory editorially must be sound, or you would not have been in your position so long?—Yes.

113. The mere fact that you have distant relatives there would not preclude you from coming here as a public-spirited man and giving this evidence?—No.

114. And I suppose your relatives would be quite satisfied to get out of the land the way they got in?—They would be very pleased to do so.

115. In your opinion, with a railway from Rotorua to Taupo, it would practically mean a new South Auckland Province?—Yes. I have already taken the bull by the horns and described it as a new province.

116. And you think that this land is at present practically worthless owing to its isolation?—Yes, sir, owing to its isolation, and now owing to that fact there is no demand made for it.

117. I suppose that financial institutions are shy of that land because it is isolated, and there has been no scientific attempt to work it because they cannot get fertilizers there?—That is so.

118. Now, I feel inclined to put in an observation of my own here as evidence—by way of cross-examination. Reference has been made by Mr. Lye to the Waikato land and the Taupo land, and there has been a comparison suggested. Now, in your opinion the Taupo lands, or portion of them, are equal, in their present native state, to what the Waikato lands were in their original state, before settlement?—Undoubtedly.

119. I am of the same opinion. You have had experience of both, so have I. I own property in both places, but I am not interested in the railway, because I have but half an acre in the pumice country. But I have seen what can be done there. In your opinion the Taupo country, or the great majority of it, is the same class of land as that at Rotorua?—Yes, sir.

120. Have you any knowledge of the Hamurana country?—Yes.

121. You have been there lately?—Less than two years ago.

122. You will agree with me if I say that that block of land at Hamurana—which is the same as the pumice country—was disked and turned over and sown with hardly any manure, and that it is as good as any Waikato country to-day?—Yes, I can quite believe it.

123. *Mr. Hanson.*] Did I understand you to say that the same class of soil extended right through to the foothills of the Urewera country?—No, there is a good deal of swamp area in the valleys of the Waiotapu and the Waikato.

124. But apart from the swamp soil it is the same type of country?—Yes, it is part of the great pumiceous area, and although it may vary in texture I do not think it varies much in composition.