

74. And have they done all right?—Yes. My experience is that it costs about £1,000 to start a man and give him all he requires—cows, plant, and everything. One man has been paying me £300 a year, and he has done well himself.

75. After you have used fertilizers in the first place, do you repeat using them?—The more you use the better.

76. Does the land demand that you use a lot of fertilizer?—The more the better. The more you put in, the more you get out. The main thing for the pumice area is cheap manure.

77. And the railway-line would give you that opportunity?—Yes.

78. Have you seen the prison farm?—I saw it before it was broken in.

79. Do you believe that the cultivation of the land would in time get rid of the stock-sickness?—I do. It is just a matter of time.

80. You think the real cause of the sickness is the low state of the country?—The only sickness we have had is with the lambs. There has been none with the cattle or the grown-up sheep.

81. Where do you get your fertilizers?—From Auckland—by rail to Rotorua, and carted out by lorries.

82. Do you think that by getting it by rail it would be more economical than in the way you get it now?—Certainly.

83. It would reduce the cost considerably?—It would.

84. What do you pay for bringing it in?—I pay £1 a ton for the carriage of manure, and £1 10s. for other goods. It has never been as cheap before. It used to cost £4 for the thirty miles. It has dropped materially in the last year or two.

85. You think it would drop considerably more if you had the railway-line?—Yes.

86. In view of the fact that you could pay as much as £4 a ton for carrying out your manure, you are convinced that other people, who would get their manure cheaper by a railway-line, could not miss making good?—Cheap manure is the main thing towards success.

87. My point is that you were able to pay £4 a ton on your manure?—Yes; we managed to exist, and we are still there.

88. The point is that you paid that £4 when you were struggling on your farm—isolated, away from everywhere—practically segregated from civilization, and burdened with that cost. Now, if you got a railway-line, the cost of your manures would come down to the lowest possible cost, and with the opening-up of the country through the railway you affirm that it would be impossible for a man who wanted to make good to fail?—Yes, certainly.

89. If you made good under the circumstances you had, you say that with all the facilities of the railway-line other men could not miss?—That is so.

90. *Mr. Lye.*] What are the prime factors that have kept back the settlement of this undoubtedly large area of land?—Prejudice, and lack of access. It was the case of the dog with a bad name.

91. Do you think that in the past they did not appreciate the value of fertilizing the land?—That is so. I always reckoned, from my Canterbury experience, that it was waste to use manure, but it is the other way about.

92. The valuers of the past have not had a full understanding of the value of fertilizers?—That is so.

93. And that is reflected in their difficulties in recent figures?—Yes.

94. Would you go so far as to say that this land cannot be brought into settlement without the railway?—I would not say that; but it could not be brought in as economically as with a railway.

95. Would a first-class road through the area promote settlement?—Certainly it would help, but the railway would help more.

96. *Mr. Makitanara.*] You say that to make settlement a success the land should be broken up by the Government before closer settlement?—That is my idea. The land should be broken up before putting the settlers on it, under proper supervision. So few men know how to break in new land.

97. If such a course were adopted, could it not be done with the present road?—It could be done, but it could not be done economically. I went there when there was no road and managed to exist.

98. *Mr. Samuel.*] What is the cost of sending goods by rail from Auckland to Rotorua?—I cannot say.

*The Chairman:* Perhaps Mr. Roussell can give us that information.

*Mr. Roussell:* Taking the average general merchandise, the rate from Auckland to Rotorua is £3 7s. 9d. per ton.

*Mr. Samuel:* Supposing the railway went through from Rotorua to Reporoa, what would be the extra cost from Rotorua to Reporoa?

*Mr. Roussell:* The actual cost would be 7s. 4d. per ton.

*Mr. Samuel:* As against £1 10s. by road?

*Mr. Roussell:* Yes. I could quote the comparative rates on manure. I propose to do so when giving my evidence.

99. *The Chairman* [to witness] You told us that about 1,000,000 acres would be served by the railway. Roughly, how far on each side of the railway did you take in?—I was taking the area between Rotorua, Waiotapu, and Taupo and the Atiamuri Road as one area—about two-thirds of that. Then, there is the Waiotapu Valley.

100. In that area of about 1,000,000 acres have you any idea of the area that is planted in Government or privately-owned forests, or company-planted?—I do not know the exact areas, but there is a good deal of it.

101. Would you say half of it?—Nothing like that.

102. Well, one-third of it?—I would not say there is that. A good deal of it.