

to contend with very great difficulties in handling sheep. Sheep did not thrive there. But when closer settlement took place, with cultivation and fertilizing, that disappeared altogether. There is now no trouble there at all.

16. You feel that the same results would come at Taupo?—I think so.

17. What is your opinion about the land from the sheep-farming point of view?—I think it is essentially cattle country, but there are portions of it quite good for sheep.

18. You know that the prison farm has taken prizes for lambs?—I understand so. I am not acquainted with any of the land south of Taupo.

19. If it was confined to cattle country it would pay to develop it?—Yes. It is absolutely dairying country for small settlers. Dairy cows would be the chief occupation of farmers there.

20. You are absolutely convinced that a mistake has been made in stopping the Taupo Railway?—I think the railway should have gone on in the interests of settlement. I do not think that area will be successfully settled without a railway. The settlers will be handicapped with motor-lorry freights, even though a good road is put in; and I feel certain in saying that even if a road is put in, a railway will go in, because motor-lorry traffic as we know it to-day cannot carry fertilizers and other materials for breaking in country as cheaply as a railway can. Further, motor-lorries cannot shift timber as cheaply as a railway can; and the timber in the area will have to be shifted in the near future—I think that is unquestionable.

21. Do you think it would be more profitable from the State point of view for the Government to tackle a problem of that kind, which has proved profitable to those who are settled in the district, than it would be to pay large sums of money for land?—I think it is a mistake to buy improved farms. I have never done it, and never encouraged my boys to do it. It is far better to take up raw country and break it in; far better still if you can induce people to settle on land by getting it ready for them, so as to give them a good start.

22. *The Chairman.*] You have been in the district for thirty years, and you say that what the settlers need is the railway?—Yes.

23. If a road were put in, would they not be in a benefited position?—Yes, to a degree.

THURSDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1929.

EDWARD EARLE VAILE further examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Vaile, do you wish now, before the Committee hears any other evidence, to tender the balance of your evidence?—Yes, subject to your approval.

2. We want to meet you on the point; if you prefer to do so, we have no objection. Will you therefore proceed?—I would like, first of all, to repeat the invitation which I gave to you briefly last night, to visit the district, because we want every one to have as complete a knowledge as possible, and we want to dispel any prejudice that may exist against our district, and to let you see the country for yourselves. Unfortunately, this is one of the worst months in the year for visiting the district. However, the country is there and we cannot bring it to you, but if you will come to it we will make you welcome. We cannot do you perhaps as well as the Grand Hotel, but we will make you welcome, and we will see that you do not perish from cold or hunger, so that if you will honour us with your company we shall be most delighted.

3. Thank you for the invitation, Mr. Vaile. It is a matter upon which I will have to confer, to see whether we have the power to visit the district; and then the matter will have to go before the Committee. The invitation will have our careful consideration.—I thought that perhaps if the matter were treated as an individual invitation some of you might care to leave to-morrow evening, which would give you Saturday and Sunday there.

4. Unfortunately that would not suit me, as I have another engagement in the Wairarapa at the week-end.—Then, anyhow, I hope you will not regard it as a formal matter, but as a cordial invitation. Now, may I ask if there could be obtained from the Railway Department a return of the manures received at Matamata last year, and at Rotorua.

*The Chairman:* Yes, you may ask that, and I will submit the request to the Railway Department. As I stated before, it is not for any Department to put in any evidence unless the Committee resolves that it wants evidence of the kind, but it will be submitted to the Minister, and I will put it before the Committee.

*Mr. Samuel:* It is a matter for the Committee, and not for the Minister.

*The Chairman:* But in all cases, even in the House, the Minister has the right to refuse to lay a paper on the table.

*Mr. Samuel:* If it is a departmental paper that is so, but if it is information required by a Committee, you will notice that the constitution of every Committee gives its power to call for persons and papers.

*The Chairman:* That is so; we have absolutely unfettered power in that respect.

*Witness:* Sir, upon the last occasion I offered to give a written offer of my property to the Government at its present value. This is it [produced and handed in—Exhibit 2]. Then, this [produced] is a map taken out of the ordinary Railway Guide, and I want to draw your attention to the fact that in the whole of the centre of the North Island there is no adequate means of communication, either by land or by sea. If that land is worthless it is useless putting communication into it, but if we show you that it is valuable country, then I say it is so great a national loss if it is not opened up that it amounts to a crime. First of all, I would like to say that the State forests approximate to this railway comprise 210,000 acres. They join the railway at many points, and extend roughly to