

48. You know how they work there—hard team-work?—Yes. We have done the same kind of thing ourselves.

49. Do you not think that would be a quicker way of bringing the land into cultivation than to have one man struggling even on wages—by giving the team modern tractors, and other modern machinery?—The ideal way, of course, is to develop the land before you put the man on it.

50. The question is, which is the best way to develop that land—whether it would be better to do it with team-work. Would it be better to do the rough work as team-work?—I think a lot of the work can be done on a big scale at a much cheaper cost. You would have less overhead cost, and need less plant.

51. You think it would be better to have that system than to be continually, year by year, spending thousands of pounds creating charitable jobs, where men are of little use to the nation and to themselves?—A much cheaper and better thing.

52. We are spending £150,000 a year on what may be called charitable doles. Would it be better to take the men and give them a job like that?—Yes, if you can get the right men.

53. There is no party politics in this matter at all. We are trying to create channels through which we can profitably give men an opportunity of having something they can call their own, and an interest in life. The unemployed man has no interest in life. We want to see these men set up, so that each of them will have a home, and return something to the nation for the help it gives them. You think that on the mass system of settlement it could be done?—Yes, I think it could, on the best of the land. Up to a certain point it can be done that way.

54. It would be better to do that than that some of the men should be wasting their time on some charitable job, and on doles?—There would be a chance of getting some of the expenditure back.

55. You say that in that case the settlement would need to precede the railway, and not the railway-line precede the settlement?—I maintain that one is just as important as the other. They are bound up together. To develop that big area without a railway would be impossible, but the railway does not want to be made at the expense of the land.

56. You say, then, that the one is inseparable from the other?—On the big scale, of course. On the small scale it is not so important, but if you are going to do a big job on the big scale, you would certainly want a railway.

57. *Mr. Massey.* Besides the twenty-five settlers under your scheme, are there any outside suppliers to your company's factory?—There are two.

58. How much butterfat per acre do they produce?—The best of our farms are producing from 100 lb. to 120 lb. to the acre.

59. What is the average?—It will not be above 85 lb. or 90 lb. Although our land is much the same, the personal element comes into the matter, and the stock they are milking on some of the farms is better than on others.

60. If you were buying country, how much money could you afford to give per acre, or would you base your calculation on so-much per cow?—On the land we have developed, our settlers, on 1s. 6d. per pound, are paying interest on £25 an acre, on land carrying a cow to 2 acres.

61. That is £50 per cow?—That is the position, practically.

62. Are you of opinion that it would pay better to develop waste country and get all that is in it than to buy improved country?—After my experience I think the best chance lies in developed country. I think New Zealand would carry nearly double its population before the Taupo Plains need to be touched. We could carry double the present population in Hawke's Bay.

63. *Mr. Jenkins.* Do you mean by working in unproductive land, or by subdividing?—By subdividing the land. Every time you subdivide land you get more out of it.

64. *Mr. Massey.* Are you of opinion that it would pay the Crown far better to develop its own unproductive land than to put money into country that is producing something?—I think a still better proposition is to get men on country that is already developed and producing.

65. *Mr. Semple.* That depends upon the amount you pay, does it not?—I think you can pay the producing value, because every time you subdivide a block of, say, 5,000 acres into 500-acre sections you increase the production.

66. But can you get it at its productive value?—I think so.

67. *Mr. Massey.* You said you are of opinion that a big area of the pumice country can be successfully developed: have you any idea what area?—Economically I do not know that it can. Nothing is impossible. It is quite possible to do it, but economically it is a big job. I do not think the area on which you could make it a success is very great.

68. Do you know what the Waikato was like fifteen years ago?—Yes.

69. Do you know what Matamata was like fifteen years ago?—Yes.

70. How will the Rotorua-Taupo area compare with Matamata fifteen years ago?—It is not to be compared with Matamata, or with any Waikato country.

71. How does it compare with Tokoroa?—Tokoroa is better than a big area of that, with the exception of a few pockets. We have body in our ground.

72. But fifteen years ago your country was considered valueless?—Absolutely. It is absolutely worthless now until you work on it.

73. Settlement is gradually spreading as your country develops; you are developing country farther out?—Yes. There is still any amount of it in our district, and right out to the Waikato River, as good as ours, and quite capable of being handled. After you cross the Waikato towards Oruanui it is not quite so good. It gets inferior from Atiamuri south. We are working into the purely pumice country there.

74. Still, there are good stretches of country there?—Pockets here and there.