

the nucleus of the herds that would be later developed on the ground. I believe it might be possible to get back a good deal of the outlay on the first crop. You happen to have taken the points I have in mind when one is in the unfortunate position of having something to do with the development of this country from the homestead-settlement point of view.

65. I am not altogether discussing the matter from the railway point of view, but rather from the land-settlement point of view. Of course, the railway is closely connected with a land-settlement scheme, and I am trying to elicit information about both. If these crops could be profitably disposed of from the time you have spent £4 an acre on the land, the bringing of the land into the permanent state should be a paying proposition?—I am afraid that it will not. Under a Government scheme to bring the land into a condition to allow of settlers making a good living off comparatively small holdings, one feels that it is going to necessitate the outlay of close on £30 an acre. In that figure, as you can imagine, there are quite large expenditures which are not connected with the actual production of crops, such as fencing. Fencing into small areas, particularly for dairy-farms, will run well over £4 an acre.

66. Surely not: do you say £4 an acre for fencing?—Yes.

67. Have you ever worked out the cost of fencing per acre: how would you arrive at your figure?—I have estimates. In order to get a cow to 2½ acres on a farm of 150 acres, I consider that the majority of the paddocks will require to be not more than 6 acres each.

68. Good heavens!—Yes.

69. Six-acre paddocks on a dairy-farm?—Yes, that is the tendency on all high-production dairy-farms at the present time where the area is not large.

70. You have a wonderful idea of the Taupo lands if you are going to divide them into 6-acre paddocks?—Unless you can get the land to that stage I do not think the outlook for success is great.

71. Do you think the land could be got to that stage?—Certain of it, with really liberal expenditure.

72. I ought not to question you further, because I think that is an excellent answer and I am quite satisfied with it. However, under the conditions you have stated, do you agree with me when I say that there are all the possibilities of a good Government land-settlement scheme? I am asking this information for the benefit of the Minister of Public Works and not for myself?—I do not hold the view that it would pay.

73. You still suggest that fencing is going to cost £4 an acre?—In the finally fully developed farm, certainly.

74. *Mr. Lye.*] Do you seriously believe that if a crop of turnips were given to Waikato farmers for nothing, they would pay for the transport of the turnips or take their cows to the turnips to graze them off?—It is not a popular crop with cows, but still I believe you would get a certain amount of grazing. That, of course, would be a matter one would have to find out.

75. At the period of the year when it would be necessary to feed-off the turnips the cows would be in calf and would not be able to stand being transported or driven?—That is so as far as dairy cows are concerned; the utilization of the swede crop does not enter into the matter.

76. Would it be possible to dispose of a crop of turnips if there was no stock in the Taupo district? Would it be possible to give the crop away for nothing for animals in the lower Waitako?—No.

77. *Hon. Mr. Ransom.*] Are you familiar with the Guthrie Settlement?—Yes.

78. What do you consider are the prospects of the settlers on that block?—Hopeless, unless they are adequately financed.

79. Do you consider that any of these men had capital when they went on to the land there?—Yes. Considering the time they have been there and the resources at their disposal they have worked wonderfully well, and they represent a very fine small band of pioneers.

80. Provided these men were granted by the Government 50 per cent. on the capital improvements they have made from time to time, what do you consider their prospects would be?—The capital improvements might be very small.

81. I do not refer to fencing, but bringing the land in under grass and so on?—I would require to know the actual amount of money available. One can say definitely that in order to hold success these settlers will have to be financed, and financed freely, from the point of view of having proper stock for consolidation. At the present time they have a certain area in grass but no stock. Of course, the trouble is that that the grass is not going to do very much good without stock consolidation, and so on, and when it comes to a valuation of that grass that fact tends to make the capitalization by the valuer very low.

82. You referred to the fact that no special crop could be taken off this country with the exception of potatoes?—I mentioned that as an example, but if every settler grew potatoes it would not be any good. It happens that Mr. Parsons has established a potato trade with Rotorua, and as he has an advantage of about £4 over southern potatoes, through his ability to get his produce into Rotorua without the expense that the southern people have, it is profitable to him. He gets most of his income from potatoes.

83. What is your experience in regard to the growing of grain?—I do not really know very much about that. I have devoted my attention mainly to the pasture side. Even with regard to oats, one takes it that future development on a large scale will most likely be mainly done by tractor work, so that the necessity for growing oats need not arise. One does not view the growing of a grain crop in the pumice country as a type of utilization tending to the final improvement of the ground.

84. Would it not have a value as chaff, outside the district?—Not outside. In regard to a cash crop of that description, it has to be transported a very considerable distance, and there the necessity for adequate transport facilities comes in. Did one consider for a moment that the pumice country was likely to develop into a grain-growing district one would require to consider very seriously whether or not railway facilities would have to be procured. But personally I do not think there is much outlook for the making of money out of grain-growing in the pumice area.