

130. Do you think it would be £3 an acre?—I am afraid your shed estimate is rather low.
131. What do you think was the cost of the house I lived in when I went there?—About £60 or £70.
132. It was a fair house, and did not cost anything like £700?—You must remember that social conditions have altered.
133. How much top-dressing would you consider necessary for each of your six dressings?—About 3 cwt. That would be about £6 an acre.
134. Off that £6 an acre £1 is the freight from Rotorua?—Yes. It will cost more than £6 in that way.
135. Could you give an idea of the value of this country to the settler, in the food he will produce for himself and his family?—Of course, the settler that is really worth while can to a certain extent support himself off his holding from the start, with a good vegetable-garden. Nothing impressed me more than the statement of one of the Guthrie settlers who said, "When I have spent another £20 on this land it is mine." I asked him, "How much have you spent this year in living?" He said, "£35." That man, with finance, will be a success.
136. With regard to raiment, have you noticed how the settlers dress?—It is pretty rough at the time of the visit of the Land Board.
137. So that great expenditure on clothes is not necessary?—No, apparently.
138. As regards the produce of the land, have you seen good crops of swedes on the first furrow?—Yes.
139. And good crops of clover?—Luxuriant crops.
140. Do you not consider this as income from the land?—Under certain conditions, but not always. I view both clover growth and the swedes root-growing as being largely preliminaries from the development standpoint. I shall be delighted if they do pay under any Government scheme. It will certainly make the difficulty of successful settlement very much less, but I do not hold the view that they are of much value from the £ s. d. standpoint of securing money from them.
141. You have had experience of feeding off swedes with cattle: do you think the actual feeding off improves the land?—Yes.
142. What do you think of the added advantages of community? Do you think the country would be worth more if there were ten thousand people in it than it would be to-day?—It would entirely depend upon whether they were satisfied—whether the conditions were right, and the indications were good.
143. Does each new settler in a district help every other settler in it?—Of course.
144. The coming of conveniences such as stock-sales, halls, and buyers coming to the district?—Settlement leads to development, and you can get farm amenities and social amenities which are impossible without settlement.
145. You say that watering by means of pipes is necessary. In the Waikato do they use pipes?—On the fully developed dairy-farms pipes are rapidly coming in there.
146. Do you know any area in New Zealand cut into 200-acre sections and having running water on each?—No, but the ability to secure water on the sections is generally there.
147. Cannot water be conserved?—I should say that conservation is difficult. It only comes back to the point that the whole of the watering factor wants to be put on a really definite scientific foundation. That difficulty, I claim, is the one most urgent.
148. As to the reason why this country has not been taken up, can you state the area of new land broken in in New Zealand each year for the past few years?—The only figure one can give is that in the agricultural and pastoral statistics, stating the number of acres of new land not previously ploughed. Of course it has gone down very considerably in recent years. The extent of new grassland in New Zealand on ground that has been sown with grass on land not previously ploughed has averaged during the past three years 175,000 acres.
149. In the whole Dominion?—Yes.
150. In view of that fact, are you surprised that there has not been great settlement on this particular land?—In the days when 600,000 acres was going in settlement, the pumice country was almost completely neglected.
151. How long ago was that?—When we ran 600,000 acres a year would be in the period between 1900 and 1914. Then there was a very considerable amount of new country being sown each year till about 1921. Since 1921 the average acreage of new grass has been lower than any period since about 1892.
152. Do you know of any areas that are available in small sections?—No, but I must say that one is surprised when one goes into the pumice country at the apparent difficulty of securing blocks of land, due apparently to a very considerable area being already in occupation as freehold, though very little use is being made of it, and the large amount of Native land.
153. You instanced the land twenty-eight miles out from Reporoa: do you know that the whole of that land on the right-hand side is Native land?—No.
154. Do you know all the land on the left-hand side is forestry area, that cannot be taken up?—Does the building of a railway automatically enable it to be taken up?
155. Not automatically, but I say that when settlement comes the land will have to be opened?—One would imagine that the effort of every one desirous of developing the pumice country would be, if land was not available, to see that it was available, rather than placing such tremendous stress on the necessity for a railway. It seems to me peculiar, if everything is as good as it has been painted, that there should not have been some violent agitation for the throwing-open of Native land, if it is possible to throw it open.
156. Has your Department done anything towards the development of this area?—We have not done very much, certainly. Of course I would exclude from that anything that the Live-stock Division may have done.