

123. Have you any of it?—No, none whatever.
124. Have you seen it?—Yes, I have seen it.
125. Did you ever give any serious consideration to the cause of the stock-sickness?—No.
126. Do you think that closer settlement would dispose of that trouble—that and enriched soil?—I do not know.
127. You do not know anything about it?—No.
128. You say this land responds to fertilizers very well?—Yes.
129. And real successful handling of the land, and settlement there, depends upon the settlers' ability to get cheap fertilizers. If the settlers could get as much fertilizers as are required, you are quite confident there would be no chance of failure?—That is so.
130. You would not be afraid of taking up a farm there yourself?—No.
131. Supposing the Government said to you, "Here are 10,000 acres, and we will allow you to pick your men"—would you take it on?—Yes.
132. Would you take your coat off and get into it, with the certainty that you would win out?—Yes.
133. *Mr. Massey.*] As a man who has had the privilege of taking up some of this land, would you prefer to take a man with practical experience or a man who had only been looking around this land?—A man with practical experience, of course.
134. You also said that about 75 per cent. of the land could be economically worked?—Yes, from what I have seen of it.
135. How does Hautu Prison Farm land compare with the average land between Rotorua and Taupo?—It is of a similar nature. There are good patches and bad patches even on Hautu, as there are everywhere. There are flats at Hautu with no soil, but when clover has been sown there you will get 3 in. of soil.
136. If you had reduced rates and charges, would you put on more fertilizer than you are using at the present time?—I would try them out. The secret of fertilizing on pumice country is "little and often"—not like Pukekohe.
137. How many years ago were you living at Pukekohe?—About sixteen years ago.
138. Have you noticed any alteration there since then?—Yes.
139. What do you consider that is due to?—Top-dressing.
140. And if you had decent transport facilities and reduced charges, would you possibly be able to make the same changes in the pumice area as have been made at Pukekohe?—Yes.
141. You say that, as a practical man?—Yes.
142. You mentioned live-stock that you have sold off the prison farm?—Yes.
143. How many fat lambs did you sell last year?—About four hundred or five hundred; I could not give you the exact number—perhaps a few more.
144. Did you sell five hundred at auction?—Yes.
145. What were your top prices?—£2 2s.
146. You are quite sure about that?—Positive.
147. I will bring along the *Farmer*, because I think the price was £2 4s. 6d., I was there the day they were sold. Have you any idea of the difference between the price realized for ordinary lambs that day and the price realized for your lambs?—The highest price realized among the others was £1 8s., against our price of £2 2s.
148. And those lambs of yours were bought by whom?—By the Auckland Meat Co. I understand that the last lot was sent Home to Smithfield Market.
149. But the Auckland Meat Co. bought the lot to which I refer. What was the weight of those lambs?—66 lb.
150. And you also sold fat bullocks that day?—Yes.
151. How did your price compare with others sold that day?—About the same. I am not positive whether we topped the market, but we were not very far off it.
152. You are quite confident that practically the whole area can be economically farmed?—I am certain of it.
153. You are also certain that the railway would assist greatly in the development of that area?—Yes, with cheaper fertilizers, that is the main point—reduced costs.
154. You are also of the opinion that you can get water in that area by boring?—Yes.
155. What area are you referring to?—The area between Rotorua and Taupo. Hautu, of course, is well watered.
156. *Mr. Samuel.*] What is the nature of the Hautu country?—Pumice.
157. Similar to the general run of the Taupo country?—Yes.
158. The same belt goes right across?—Yes.
159. And you have made it into really good farming-land?—Yes, that is so.
160. And if an official of the Lands and Survey Department were to say that the Taupo country could not be brought into profitable production, would you say his opinion is wrong?—He has only to see our Hautu country to know that he was wrong.
161. And it is all the same class of country?—Yes.
162. And what you can do other people can do?—Yes.
163. You say that this country can be brought in for £15 per acre?—Yes.
164. That is, under prison-farm conditions?—Yes.
165. And you say further that as you progress the cost of bringing it in will become cheaper?—Yes, one helps the other.
166. Therefore, if a big settlement scheme were encouraged, they could all help one another and costs would be reduced?—Yes, the community system would bring down the cost.