

*Mr. Jenkins.*] In your statement you put down the cost of the wheat-growing land as £2 17s. 10d. per acre, and a little later on you show the value of the horse-paddock as 10 acres at £1 10s. per acre. There seems to be an inconsistency there?—Your horse-paddock is usually your lightest ground. You generally pick out a spare bit of land which is not worth as much as the other for a horse-paddock.

It is usual to keep the horses near the homestead?—Good wheat land is more valuable for wheat-growing than for grazing horses on.

You state that you intend to go in for sheep-farming, so I conclude that the land can be used profitably for other purposes than wheat-growing?—I have to prove that yet. I have had only six months at sheep-farming. I have another six months to go.

*Rev. Mr. Carr.*] Do you agree that to make a success of it you can only grow good grass for sheep for three years in that district without bringing wheat-growing into the scheme?—Well, if you are growing wheat it is the best way of renewing the grass. There is no doubt about that.

In regard to permanent pastures, do you consider that in that district you could grow suitable grass for more than three years in succession without bringing in the wheat crops?—That is a very big question to answer. In some instances we get the grass-grub down our way, and it takes all the grass off. The best thing one can do in a case like that is to take a crop of wheat off the land.

Do you not consider that to make the policy of Government control satisfactory it is necessary for the wheat-growers to know at least in November in the previous year what prices would be paid for their wheat? You will agree that it is a most important point that in order to make the sliding scale of duties at all effective the farmer must be guaranteed a profitable price at least in November of the previous year?—Yes. With the sliding scale of duties we know pretty well from one year's end to the other what price we will get for our wheat. The best way, I contend, is for the wheat-grower to make a contract with the miller at a fixed price. The miller can make a contract with you if the sliding scale of duties is there, because he knows what he can get for his flour. He knows Australian flour will cost £15 15s. to land in New Zealand.

*Mr. Macpherson.*] With regard to the question of permanent grasses, I suppose, with your wide experience, you are quite conversant with the fact that with the wheat-growers in Canterbury and North Otago there is no permanent grass?—On certain country.

I mean, from a profitable point of view to the farmer, the grass has to be renewed?—On a lot of the country the grass has to be renewed.

Cocksfoot, which is a permanent grass, does not give the best results so far as fattening sheep and lambs and stock-raising is concerned?—That is a fact.

You are also aware that there has been a big step forward in connection with getting permanent grasses, but so far as you are personally concerned you have not tested that out?—I have not.

The matter is just in the initial stages now?—That is so.

So far as the results in connection with permanent grasses in Hawke's Bay and elsewhere are concerned, it will take some years to get proof of that scientific discovery?—Yes.

A matter of great importance is the time of notification whether there is to be any protection or not. It has been the bugbear of the wheat-grower ever since protection was instituted?—That is a fact.

For all practical purposes you are of opinion that the wheat-grower should know at least during the month of November whether protection is to be given?—Yes, he should know then. If you leave the sliding scale as it is we are absolutely safe; we can go straight ahead, and there is no need to worry.

But you would require a guarantee for a certain number of years that the duty would remain?—Yes, for the term the Government is in. I am satisfied we have a jolly good case for the sliding scale of duties.

You can say definitely, from your wide experience, that you have not found a permanent grass that would pay you as a practical farmer?—On some of my land I have permanent grass which has been down for forty years. It is heavier country and is a bit wet, and is probably not the best wheat-growing land.

So far as wheat-growing lands are concerned, the farmer has not yet discovered a permanent grass. We know there are isolated cases where you can have permanent grass, but it is infinitesimal?—The grass in Canterbury wheat-growing land seems to require renewing.

*The Chairman.*] You are evidently a very keen advocate for the present sliding scale of duty?—I am, sir.

Do you absolutely insist that the present basis should be maintained—that is, £3 10s.?—Yes. At the time when they were arranging about the sliding scale we came to Wellington and asked for an increase of £1.

Over and above the present?—No. They had 10s. below the present, and we got it raised 10s. The margin is very close, as I think my figures will show.

Regarding the difference in price between wheat here and in Australia—roughly speaking, 6d. a bushel—do you contend that the farmer gets the whole of the benefit of protection now given?—Yes, I contend the farmer gets the whole of the protection given now. Of course, in the course of my statement I showed you where I had managed to make a contract with the millers at 6s., 6s. 3d., and 6s. 9d. a bushel. At those prices I am satisfied that the miller gave us all he could.

Were those prices sacks extra?—Yes, and the prices are f.o.b.

*Rev. Mr. Carr.*] What year was that?—Last harvest.

*The Chairman.*] The price was sacks extra, f.o.b. ship. What is the cost f.o.b. ship?—An average of about 3d. per bushel.

You do not grow as much of the expensive wheat as you do the other?—No.