

59. Then, as to the capabilities of the land for the purposes of settlement?—Nearly the whole of it is valuable as grazing land. It is undulating land, broken more or less. The leading valleys between the rivers are the only level portions of the land.

60. Can you give an idea of what is the general character of the soil?—The greater portion of it is sandstone formation, but I dare say that one-third of it would be limestone. Of course, the limestone formation is in the rough and broken portion of the land. I may mention that I was employed by Mr. Marchant, surveyor, of Wellington, to value the Mangaone Block, and I valued it at from 10s. to £2 10s. per acre. I do not know whether that price will be accepted by the Waste Lands Board. It is only my own valuation.

61. Can you say whether that portion which you value at 10s. an acre is the greater portion or the smaller?—The greater portion I would value at £1 per acre.

62. *Colonel Pearce.*] Do you know the land between Eketahuna and Mauriceville at all?—No; I am not well acquainted with that locality.

63. Do you know sufficient of it to say whether it is of equal value to the land to which you have just referred?—It is not of the same value as that land. A considerable part of the land is very bad and broken in the locality of Mauriceville.

64. *Mr. Wright.*] Is the character of the bush generally better or worse than that which we have seen from the road?—It is far more broken than what you have seen when travelling along the road; but the character of the Government land is better at the back part of the block than that which you came through to-day.

65. What is the quality of the timber?—The timber is of no value at all. There is barely enough valuable timber for fencing purposes on the Government blocks.

66. And then it is very much inferior, as regards timber, to that land which we have seen to-day?—You have seen far better timber on the Native portions of land than any in the Government blocks.

67. To what extent generally does that undulating land extend between the ranges?—The whole of the blocks that I have surveyed I should classify as undulating land, and I believe that the whole of the bush land is almost similar in character. The Native portions of the land are certainly better in quality.

68. You told us you surveyed blocks of some 60,000 acres in extent: do those blocks represent the whole of the undulating land between the ranges, or is there much more to be surveyed?—There is a great deal more land not yet surveyed belonging to the Government, extending to the Puketoi Range, which is nearly all of limestone formation.

69. Speaking approximately, could you say how many thousand acres that land would comprise?—No; I could not give the acreage because I do not know the boundaries of the Government land towards the coast. When Mr. Marchant was inspecting the work I did on the Pahiatua Survey he was surprised to see so much surplus land available for grazing purposes not yet surveyed, his impression evidently being that it was of a more broken character.

70. When you stated that the timber was of very little value, is that because you attach very little value to the red pine, or is the land well covered with red pine?—No, it is very poor red-pine bush indeed, and rather scattered. Tawa and rata preponderate.

71. *Mr. Reid.*] You have spoken of the land as good grazing land. When that land was cleared do you consider that it would be good grazing land?—So far as the quality of the soil is concerned I consider that it would be very good land for cropping; but there are certain portions of it broken and fit for nothing but grazing purposes.

72. I presume you mean that all that could be ploughed would be suitable as agricultural land?—Yes.

73. Is there any considerable portion of this land stony so as to obstruct ploughing?—No; the only portion stony is that along the river-bed of the Mangatainoka River, and it would not be worth ploughing.

74. Does that form any large portion of the area?—No; I do not think it comprises more than a thousand acres of the two blocks I surveyed.

75. *Mr. Clark.*] You mentioned that the soil around Mauriceville is poor: is that on account of its being broken, or is it otherwise of poor quality?—I think it is a poor class of soil, comparing the grass and the cultivations that actually have been made at Mauriceville and at Eketahuna. There is no doubt the land being more broken would affect the soil to a certain extent. The water would carry away a great deal of the soil from the hills.

76. *Mr. Wright.*] Can you give the Commission any information as to the character of the land between Foxton and Wellington? Do you know anything of that district?—I have not been very much through that district, but my impression is, from what I know of it, that it is nearly all excessively bad land. I surveyed land between Otaki and Wellington, and it was really very bad land indeed. There was no comparison between the land in the Otaki District and the land between Masterton and Woodville, so far as purposes of occupation go.

77. *The Chairman.*] Personally you are not well acquainted with the country?—No, I am not. There is no railway reserve through the two blocks I have referred to as having surveyed, except a reserve of three chains in width which was made along the main line of road.

78. *Mr. Reid.*] Could you inform us whether the surveyed line from Masterton is along the main road?—I am not acquainted with any portions of the line except those I surveyed; and in those blocks there is no other reserve but that along the road.

79. *Mr. Wright.*] Have you travelled over the land between the Manawatu and Otaki?—I have merely travelled along the main road-line going from Otaki to Manawatu. I mean the beach-road.

80. As far as your knowledge of that part of the country extends, can you say what is the relative value of the land between Otaki and Manawatu as compared with the land in this district?—My impression is that the land through the bush in this district is treble the value of the land between Otaki and Manawatu. The land would simply be of use for rough runs.