

standing. There was no objection to the Lower Pareora Riding going over. Thinks that the county as a whole did not wish to be dismembered. Winchester, Temuka, and Silverstream are the largest wool-scouring works, and wool goes there from Waimate for scouring; goes to Winchester in quantity. Knows that it is of value to farmers to have farmers behind them. If there was no Waimate County the Levels County would not be quite so valuable, and if there were no surrounding country the port would not be so valuable. The loss of traffic from Waimate would be very severe.

Cross-examined by Mr. Raymond.—The true basis of the value of the land is its productive value. What you get out of land, less the cost of carriage to market, is the value of the land. As to his land near Saltwater Creek, it grows bad crops. The tenant might be able to work it better than he did. Cannot say why he pays so much rent. Cannot say if land on the south side of Pareora pays 11s. 6d. per acre. Since Pareora was purchased by the Government the value of land has increased. The tenants ought to be doing well. Knows Disle's farm. He has two properties. Should think that the lower land is worth from £12 to £13 an acre. Knows Stowell's farm is worth £12 to £13, and perhaps more. Is very valuable—perhaps might be worth £15. *Re* Willowbridge, half-way between Timaru and Oamaru: this land was sold for £28, and this was as far removed from Timaru and Oamaru as any part of Waimate. Bought Boyle's farm in Otaio. Believes the last tenant gave £1 an acre for it. Would not like to say what he would let it for. Was aware that the majority of the Upper Pareora Riding people in value wanted to secede. Elworthy wished to secede. It was the petition *re* incorporation that did not include the reference to Lower Pareora Riding. Refers to the petition against the riding going to Levels. The bulk of his property is in Otaio Riding. The Waimate County did not take any active steps to oppose the Bill. Witness did. The majority supported him. Thinks Mr. Walker and Mr. Studholme voted in favour of secession. The other five voted against. Saw a solicitor about it. There was a solicitor instructed by witness to oppose the Bill. *Re* wool: A lot of Waimate wool is scoured at Winchester. It went by rail. If there was no Levels County the Waimate County would be less valuable.

Re-examined by Mr. Kinnerney.—The market town lends additional value to the adjacent town. Much stuff is grown round the town for consumption in the town. It tends to give an increased value to the land, and as the town prospers the trade increases. The port is a large factor in the increase of the town. From his experience and knowledge finds that land near the town is more easy to let than elsewhere. Without the union of Waimate, Geraldine, and Levels does not think that Levels could have made a port. As to the Bill, knows that a large number of Bills are slaughtered by pressure of other business.

By the Commissioner.—The Council would not admit any liability as to the maintenance of these roads.

*John Mundell* sworn.—Is head auctioneer for the Co-operative Association, Timaru. This association has large business in land. Is acquainted with the value of land in Levels, but not so much in Waimate. Considers that the establishment of the Port of Timaru enhances the value of Levels land materially. It has advanced the lands more proportionately in Levels within ten miles of the port than in any other place, in his opinion to the extent of 25 per cent. at least. The port has had a marked effect upon the prosperity of the town. The people near the town can grow much more by living near the town than if they lived further away. As to sheep on the Main South Road: Mobs from Otago coming by road come by our roads. The sheep are often railed to St. Andrew's, and then if not sold they are travelled further north, and a considerable amount of sheep come. The majority of the biggest buyers live in Levels, and some in Mackenzie. These men amongst them buy half the whole lot. Thinks the principal wool-scouring works is Clarke's at Washdyke, in Levels; but not much is roaded up from Waimate to there—it goes by rail.

Cross-examined by Mr. Raymond.—Do not know the boundaries of the Upper and Lower Pareora Ridings, and cannot speak of Elworthy's country. The lands north of Otaio and south of Pareora should be a part of Levels County. Timaru is the only outlet for that country. Creameries are now established throughout the Waimate County, and this only refers to milk. There are a number of products within a radius of ten miles, and these products are trade to the town, and these are the things that make the land more valuable. The dealers who buy the sheep are middlemen.

Cross-examined by Mr. Kinnerney.—Adheres to his statement as to the increase in value within a ten-mile radius. Timaru is the outlet for a good deal more than from Levels.

(This closed the evidence for Waimate.)

*Mr. Orbell* recalled.—Heard Mr. Winter's evidence. Met Mr. Winter on the road and spoke to him. Mr. Winter said there were 7,000 sheep. Counted them myself, and there were 4,000, and part of them were brought only half a mile on the road and others four miles on the road. *Re* cartage from Cannington: Mr. Kinnerney read from a paper in reference to this. Described the traffic from Cannington and bush carted, and Mr. Kinnerney in cross-examination said that the road only carried Cannington wool. The Cannington-Cave Road was not under discussion until he gave his evidence. His previous evidence was on the Cave-Point Road, and Mr. Rolleston tried to elicit from him that heavy traffic had come by the Cave-Cannington Road. The Pareora Estate was bought by Government. As a whole it was opened at the same price as it was sold to Government. Mr. Lisle was manager of it. It was never under offer as a whole. The price was not from £8 10s. to £8 15s. an acre. It was not fixed to average that. The company would not sell in farms at that price. The Council did not attach any importance in respect to light traffic; our bone of contention was for through traffic right through to Timaru. It did not matter what traffic it was. The heavy traffic was our great grievance. It was the through traffic. Did not attach any importance to interchange of light traffic, but to excess of light traffic. Met Mr. Winter on the road. Was going to meet the sheep, and no sheep were added to them after he saw them.