

65. With regard to the *papatupu* land, if a Native were entitled to sell a crop of oats or maize would you consider that illegal?—No.

66. Then, if you do not consider it illegal to sell a crop of potatoes, oats, or maize, the same would apply to timber?—Yes; that is so. It cannot prevent a Native using the land to the best advantage.

GEORGE ALBERT GAMMAN examined. (No. 3.)

67. *Mr. Fraser.*] You were one of the partners of Gamman and Co., timber-merchants, Palmerston North?—That is so.

68. Mr. Weston has just told the Committee of an agreement his firm has drawn up for your company in connection with land at Raetihi?—Yes, that is correct.

69. How many acres are there in that property?—Just about 10,000 acres.

70. How many acres of milling-timber are there in that property?—I should say there would be about 6,000 acres of milling-timber.

71. What are the timbers?—White-pine, rimu, matai, and some totara.

72. What do you mean by "some totara": do you mean isolated trees?—Yes; it is ordinary rimu and white-pine bush, with a little totara.

73. How long is your agreement for?—Twenty-one years.

74. *The Chairman.*] Have you a copy of the agreement with you?—No, I have not.

75. *Mr. Fraser.*] I suppose you can give us an idea of what the terms are?—Well, there are a good many clauses in it.

76. Did the Natives approach you with regard to leasing this land?—They approached my firm.

77. Can you tell the Committee the price you were paying for royalty for these timbers?—2d. on white-pine, 3d. on rimu, 6d. on matai, and 1s. 6d. on totara. That is per 100 ft. superficial, sawn measurement.

78. Can you tell the Committee—I do not want you to put an extravagant value on it—what rent or payment per acre the Natives should get on this basis?—I should say they would get about £3 10s. an acre.

79. So that for these 6,000 acres of milling-timber they would receive £21,000?—Yes.

80. How many miles is this land from the railway at the present time?—About forty or fifty—nearer fifty than forty.

81. Can you tell the Committee what you estimate your outlay to be on this land before you commence operations?—We have decided to put all our plant on this place, and that would mean the outlay of £15,000 before we commenced operating on it.

82. You pay the Natives the royalty you have already stated: now, what protection have the Natives from being defrauded in the amount of timber cut?—They have a right under the agreement to have any one they choose to inspect our books.

83. Any solicitor or representative could inspect your books at any time?—That is so.

84. With regard to the profit side of the timber, the Natives get on an average 7d. per 100 superficial feet for this timber?—Yes; between 6d. and 7d.

85. What is the nearest point to the main trunk line?—Ohakune.

86. Taking the nearest point on the railway now, what would be the freight from there to your market at the present time—I am not talking of fifty years hence?—About 4s. per 100 ft.

87. The Natives get 7d. and the Government get 4s.: now, what would be your profit per 100 ft. after paying all expenses?—We reckon that if we get 1s. per 100 ft. profit all through we do very well.

88. Have you other leases of timber from Europeans?—At Dannevirke we have.

89. Do you pay royalty there?—Yes.

90. What do you pay to Europeans?—We have a sliding-scale from 4d. to 6d. It would be an average of about 5d.

91. Who is the European?—Mr. Rathbone. I am referring to rimu.

92. And white-pine?—Not white-pine. I am referring to rimu, and that is about the average. It is only approximate, as far as I can say.

93. Is that property adjacent to the railway?—The railway runs through it.

94. In fact, there is a siding on the block, is there not?—Yes.

95. What is the freight from there on the train?—From there to Wellington—that is the market at the present time—it is 3s., the exact figure.

96. Turning to the land at Raetihi, are there any adjoining properties occupied by Europeans?—Yes; they are settled all round.

97. Is there similar timber on this land adjoining?—Yes, in many places. It was much better, but it has been destroyed.

98. You mean destroyed by being fallen and burned?—Yes.

99. They were Crown lands?—Yes.

100. And they are Crown tenants now?—Yes.

101. When land has been cleared and burned, does it not enhance the danger of fire destroying the remaining bush?—Yes, very much, because the fire of these settlers burns the edges of the block and increases the danger every year. One of our 5,000-acre blocks at Dannevirke was fired right through, and more timber was destroyed than we have cut there.

102. How many hands do you anticipate employing when you start work?—About as many as we employ now—from 120 to 130 men.

103. You would employ 120 to 130 men for how long?—About ten years.

104. Do you insure these men?—Yes.

105. What is the rate now?—£3 6s. per cent.

106. What is the insurance on your plant?—£7 per £100.