

24. What proportion of your produce do you sell: you require oaten chaff for yourselves for feeding your horses and cattle?—Yes.

25. How much would you be able to sell out of your produce?—If we have 100 acres we sell all but about 10 to 15 tons, which we keep for ourselves.

26. If you had 200 tons you would only keep 15 tons?—Not much more—say 20 tons.

27. That is about one-tenth which you would keep for yourself?—Yes.

28. *Mr. Skerrett.*] A five-horse team carting six miles to the railway will carry what load?—4 tons.

29. And how many trips would that team make?—You would not make two trips a day, but about three trips in two days— one short day and one long day.

30. What would be the cost of such a team in that district per day?—£3.

31. So that it would cost £6 in two days, which would average 10s. per ton?—Yes.

32. In the cartage is not included the loading into the railway-truck?—Yes; that would be included in the cost of the cartage.

33. So that the carter loads his wagon at the farm and loads it at the railway-truck?—Yes; but he has some hands to assist at the railway.

34. Who pays the men to assist?—I do not know. I have not paid them; probably the carter does.

35. How far is Sandon from Greatford?—Nine miles.

36. And that is the place from which the greatest quantity of agricultural produce would come?—Yes.

37. How is chaff usually sold—on the truck?—Yes.

38. At the nearest railway-station?—Yes.

39. The purchaser paying freight to its destination?—Yes.

40. What is the extra freight which the Sandon farmers and the neighbouring farmers have to pay by the present method by tram to Himatangi and train to Greatford?—Something in the region of 8s. 9d. per ton.

41. Is it your opinion that the farmers in the Sandon district can compete with the farmer in the neighbourhood of Marton in oaten chaff?—No, they cannot compete in that.

42. *The Chairman.*] They might compete, but not successfully?—No, not as a business proposition.

43. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Could they make any profit?—No. They would make a small profit; but other things would pay better than that, and for that reason they go in for other things which are more profitable.

44. What is the price of chaff per ton at present?—About £4 per ton.

45. The cartage from Sandon would cost 15s. per ton?—Yes. When you take into consideration the value of the land, the siding, and the rest of it, you would not have 5s. per ton for yourself at £4 per ton.

46. Would you have any difficulty in subdividing your property?—No, none whatever. It is roaded on two sides and the front.

47. I mean in regard to its quality?—No—into 100-acre blocks.

48. Would you have any difficulty in disposing of your chaff? What do the farmers in the Sandon district do with their straw?—They burn it.

49. How many tons of straw were burnt in the Sandon district last season?—In the average season there would be something in the region of 1,000 tons burnt.

50. What is it worth?—It is worth from £2 10s. to £3 per ton threshed.

51. What do you do with the grass after the seed has been threshed from it?—It is nearly all burnt.

52. Is that a valuable article for the market?—If we could get it north it is.

53. *Mr. Hannay.*] How much of that is burnt?—There is a lot of country out there in grass-seed, but I could not tell because I do not know how the hay turns out per acre.

54. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Is there a ready market for the straw?—Yes, in the winter-time there is a very ready market for it.

55. And that would all go north and be carried over the railway?—Or go into the higher country.

56. And would, of course, produce freight for the Railway Department?—Yes.

57. *Mr. Innes.*] The Sandon farmers have in recent years given up cropping and gone in for grass-seeding?—Yes. They do both, but grass-seeding predominates.

58. Has not the price of grass-seed in the last few years been abnormally high?—Yes, especially the last year.

59. It is almost double, is it not?—No, there is about 1s. 6d. difference. The original price was 6s. 6d. as against 8s. now.

60. That grass-seed comes to Palmerston and Feilding?—Yes.

61. And is carted by the farmers themselves?—Yes, to wherever they could get it to a station, when is it put on the tram.

62. And do they always send it to Himatangi?—Yes. That is handier than carting to Palmerston North, because we cannot do without the horses on the farm.

63. But is it cheaper?—Yes, I should think it is cheaper. At all events, it is much more convenient.

64. Was there any straw burnt in the Sandon district this year?—Yes, practically all was burnt.

65. What was it worth in the market as chaff?—About £2 10s., I think.

66. Do you suggest that it would not pay you to cut it up into chaff?—No, it hardly does. 17s. 6d. a ton is what they have been charging for cutting, and it is of a bulky nature.