

25. What has happened in connection with the straw produced by those farmers who have been growing grain crops in your district?—Well, it is burnt. It does not pay to handle it. The freights kill it.

26. Supposing the method adopted were that of carting it to the nearest railway-line, what would it cost for carting, say, six miles, which is the shortest distance any settlers would have to cart it?—10s. or 12s. 6d. per ton.

27. And eight miles?—15s. per ton.

28. And, say, ten to twelve miles?—£1 per ton.

29. Is any one of those charges sufficiently high to prohibit the possibility of its being produced on payable conditions?—We could not pay the freights.

30. And is that the reason it has been destroyed?—Yes.

31. Do you agree with Mr. Phillips when he says the average destruction amounts in the district to about 1,000 tons?—Yes.

32. And it is worth from about £2 10s. to £3 per ton?—Yes.

33. And assuming it was taken to a place a hundred miles north of Marton, the railage on that stuff is lost to the Railway Department?—Yes.

34. In your opinion, suppose the railway-line were constructed through the present land occupied by the Sanson line, would that have an effect on settlement in the district?—Yes, there would be closer and more intense farming.

35. What, in your opinion, is the highest freight you could afford to pay in carrying chaff to the railway and make it pay?—I could not say.

36. But it does not pay at the price you have to pay now?—No. It is very bulky stuff, and you cannot get much in a load except you have a wagon. Some of the farmers do not have wagons, and they have to pay for cartage.

37. Mention has been made of motor-lorries. What are the difficulties attending the use of motor-lorries?—You cannot take them off the roads. You would have to shift the produce from the paddocks on to the roads. You cannot get motor-lorries up to the stacks.

38. And the extra handling in cartage from the stacks to the motor-lorries would be so much extra expense?—Yes.

39. Can you carry the same satisfactory loads on motor-lorries that you can on ordinary wagons or trucks?—No, I do not think you can.

40. *The Chairman.*] I suppose you have not tried rearing pigs in this district to any extent, have you?—No.

41. *Mr. Myers.*] What is your own area?—About 590 acres.

42. And how far are you from the tram-line now?—It runs through our place.

43. Are you near Sanson?—Two miles to the south—between Makawai and Sandon.

44. How long have you been farming in that particular property?—Forty-odd years. I was born on the farm.

45. Can you give us any idea of the price at which land sells in your neighbourhood now?—£30 to £40 per acre.

46. I suppose there are very few sales—the land is very strongly held?—Yes; there is not much changing hands.

47. And most of it is held by old settlers who bought their land in the early days at low prices?—Yes.

48. Why does it not pay you to send your straw to market: could you not make £1 a ton on it?—It is very bulky stuff to handle for one thing, and it would cost very nearly £1 per ton to cut it.

49. Have you gone into figures to see how much per ton you could net on it?—We cannot get the market—that is the trouble; and to send it up the line to where it is used the freight kills it.

50. What is your land mostly used for?—Mixed farming.

51. *Mr. Hannay.*] How many acres of oats had you this year?—Thirty-five.

52. *The Chairman.*] I suppose you would need that mostly for your own cattle and horses?—We threshed it and burnt the straw.

53. *Mr. Hannay.*] Why did you not use the straw?—Of course, we grow grass-seed, and we have sufficient grass hay to carry the cattle.

54. *Mr. Myers.*] You spoke about the subdivision of these areas: can you tell us why the subdivision has not already been made if the land is worth £30 or £40 per acre?—The neighbours have bought one another out. Many of the holdings were originally small sections.

55. You say you do not want to cut up your area?—That is so, but we might cut it up to advantage.

56. You have not thought of cutting it up so far?—No. Of course, a man could make a good living off 100 acres of this land, because you could dairy off it.

57. But you do not want a tramway for that, because the dairy-produce does not use the tramway?—Not a great deal, except for coal.

58. I was referring to exports. Still, you think the extension of the tram-line or construction of the railway would tend towards the cutting-up of those areas?—Yes, I think so.

59. *Mr. Luckie.*] The Chairman asked you a question about pig-farming. The experience in your district is that it is mainly a concomitant of dairy-farming and is run in conjunction with it?—Yes, that is so.

60. And as a matter of fact they do go down over the tram at the present time?—Yes.

61. One of the great difficulties, I understand, is to import material for your own use?—Yes.

62. You cannot get firewood?—We burn coal now because the cost of freight on firewood makes it prohibitive.

63. And the same difficulty arises in connection with fencing-posts, and will have to be met by closer subdivision of the district?—Yes.