

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF applications by Central Plains Water
Trust for resource consents from CRC
and SDC for the CPWES

AND a notice of requirement by Central
Plains Water Trust to SDC for the
designation of works for the CPWES

EVIDENCE OF GODFREY JUDD

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Godfrey Judd. I give this evidence for myself and the family company Westacre Farm Ltd.
2. The farming operation now known by that company name was started in 1897 by George Henry Judd. It is now being farmed by the fourth generation. Over the years more land in the district has been purchased. Each generation hoped that the land would be there for generations to come. The land was not given to my generation. We have worked hard as a family to purchase it, and even harder to pay it off.
3. Until 1996 the farming operation was run by myself and my brother Warwick. At this time the business was known as W O Judd & Sons Ltd. In that year we split the operation, each family taking an equitable piece of land. This is how it came to be that the farming business run by my family became known as Westacre Farm Ltd.
4. Pam and I have three children. Our son Christopher, aged 37, is now responsible for the day-to-day running of the farm. He is married to Keri and has a two-year-old son.
5. The total farm area is 308 ha, and there is a further 194 ha farm leased from a neighbour, and leases of further land of about 30 ha for the specific purpose of growing seed potatoes.
6. The farm employs 6 people outside of the family.
7. The property at which I live (we call the home block) is off the Old West Coast Road. That block is 130 ha. Christopher and his family live on the block which

- is known as the Kimberley Block. It is this land which is affected by the various applications before this hearing panel.
8. Our first purchase there was in 1977 in Bleakhouse Road. This comprised 98 ha. I have marked it “A” and coloured it green on the attached plan. The majority of that block is on the south side of Bleakhouse Road, with the balance on the north.
 9. In May 2003 an additional 80.5 ha of land was purchased, and I have marked this on the map as “B” and coloured it yellow. As I say, collectively we know them as the Kimberley Block.
 10. It is fundamental to our opposition that you understand the uses to which this land is put. It is for intensive farming based on a constant water supply available from October through to the end of March depending on the crops. We grow specialised crops such as Italian ryegrasses (the seed of which is purchased by the dairy industry for the growing of food for dairy cows). The other crops are process potatoes and carrots.
 11. These high yield crops require water, and to this end the company has spent in excess of \$1.5 million in borrowings from our bank to fund an irrigation system over the Kimberley Block.
 12. The first investment came in 1998 when we received consent to use water from the Waimakiriri River and install irrigation on block A. In June 2003 an additional consent to use water from the same river was obtained to irrigate block B.
 13. These rights are based on “A” irrigation shares. “A” shares have potential water restrictions at 41 cumecs. Our consented take is a total of 120 litres per second.

14. It is therefore possible for us to have partial water restrictions in the summer period, but this is never been longer than for a couple of weeks. Even two weeks will have a significant influence on crop healthiness, but plants will survive. So even though yield might be reduced, we can maintain sufficient income to service the debt.
15. But if we were to lose water for any longer period, then growing such crops would be unprofitable. Not only that, we would be in economic difficulties meeting the servicing obligations on our loan financing.
16. Our investment in water irrigation is therefore put in jeopardy because of the desire of others who have made no investment and yet they now want to construct a canal through the middle of our land to enable them to take water. A potential improvement to their economic circumstances comes at our expense, but our losses are more than just economic.
17. I now wish to explain in more detail why that is the case. I have a plan showing the irrigation setup for the Kimberley Block. The feeding pipes for the irrigation system pass over the area where it is proposed to build the canal. I have been told that the canal building process might take some years. Whilst I accept that it should not take years to build the section of the canal over our property, it clearly will mean that for a least one summer season, and possibly more, we are without water.
18. Our commitment to supply is well illustrated by the letters I show to you from Watties and PGG Wrightson Seeds.
19. The panel may already be well aware of how the irrigators work. Our brand is called a Rotorainer. Large booms proceed out from the central area. From end to end is a 90 m spread of water. The irrigators are on wheels and are pulled forward by a wire rope, and the hose delivering water drags behind. Those hoses are

- connected up to the connection points on the piped irrigation system. Our scheme is big enough to handle 2 rotorainers working side-by-side.
20. The property has been set up to accommodate 20 hour runs. The positioning of the canal would make it difficult for the runs to be carried out efficiently on the block.
 21. But equally important, moving machinery from one side of the canal to another would also be difficult. I have been told that a bridge will be built over the canal to service both parts of the farm property. Any such bridge would have to be wide enough to accommodate 20 tonne trucks, 10 tonne headers, tractors and trailing equipment.
 22. Equally importantly, it would have to enable the movement of the irrigators from one side of the canal to the other. It could not have sides. The irrigators are difficult to shift at the best of times, and are certainly not expected to move on anything other than flat ground. I understand that the ground leading to and from the bridge would not necessarily be flat.
 23. But if there is the slightest wind (and this is prevalent in our area), the booms of the irrigators have to be manually held at each end to prevent them swaying. This is done by stationing people on ropes attached to the ends as the movement takes place. I cannot see how that could be possible when the canal is built.
 24. I have discussed with the developers of this project whether it would be possible to shift the canal so that it travels down Bleakhouse Road (on our property or also using part of the road reserve), before turning left onto Tramway Rd.
 25. A method would still have to be found to enable our irrigation system to operate without being closed down at any time in the summer, but at least it would enable us to continue using the balance of the land for our stated farming purposes. We

would lose some land to the canal, but if the balance was available to us I believe we could still meet our contractual obligations for produce, and meet our debt obligations as well.

26. I produce a copy of the letter from Mr Crombie dated 4 December 2007 in which he states that this option is unworkable because (in the case of my proposal outlined above) it would mean having to dig the canal into the ground 5 m, and such costs would be unacceptable.
27. I do not accept that the gradient difference between the north and south of the Kimberley Block is as much as is stated in that letter. It was more a case of not looking for a way forward in case it showed a weakness in negotiating position with others.
28. Yet when I look at the broad plan for the canal, there is the least the inference that it has been shifted in some places to suit the property interests of those who might otherwise be affected.
29. Separately, I am concerned about the width of the land area which is to be the subject of the designation. This is much wider than the actual canal, and is said to allow for some movement in the canal position. But once the designation is in place, by itself it places some potential limitations on land use awaiting any time when the canal project might actually be built.
30. My family has made a commitment to this part of Canterbury for many generations. I do not want it placed at risk because others elsewhere wish to improve their prosperity. I ask that you carefully listen to the concerns of the individual landowners who stand to lose because of a desire to improve the position of others.