

Mr. J. D. BAIRD examined.

27A. *The Chairman*] You are the City Surveyor of Wellington?—I am.

28. Were you present at the sale of the reclaimed land?—I was, and I was a purchaser.

29. It is stated in the petition which is now before the Committee that a promise was made by the auctioneer on behalf of the Government to the effect that the streets on the reclaimed land should be made and metalled, and that the footpaths should be properly made?—Yes; that is the fact. In January, before the sale, I had charge of the reclamation contract, and the Government asked me to complete plans for the formation of the streets.

30. What was your estimate of the cost of making the streets?—£48 per chain without the channelling.

31. What was the nature of the promise made at the sale?—I think Mr. White asked the auctioneer whether the streets would be formed and metalled, and Mr. Duncan (the auctioneer) got down from his rostrum and had a conversation with Colonel Whitmore. A few minutes afterwards he stated that Colonel Whitmore had promised, on behalf of the Government, to have the streets formed thoroughly, and not in the wretched half-and-half way that the Provincial Government would have done the work. As I have said, I had previously received instructions from the Government to prepare specifications for the proper forming and metalling of the streets and footpaths.

32. How many chains were there in the streets?—I cannot say at present, but I will furnish the information.

33. Will you also send in a statement of the amount of rates which has been collected on this property?—I will. The Government hold four-fifths of the frontage to these streets, and they pay no rates at all. They received upwards of £80,000 for the land; and after reserving for themselves forty-six acres, all the cost of the reclamation was £60,511.

34. *Mr. W. White.*] How did you arrive at the amount of £48 per chain for forming and metalling?—That was the estimate I prepared and sent to the Government.

35. *Mr. W. C. Buchanan.*] Did you understand from the Government's promise, made through the auctioneer, that all the necessary footpaths, and channelling, kerbing, and metalling was to be done?—Yes; and not only from the auctioneer's statement, but also from the instructions I had got from the Government to prepare the specifications.

Mr. R. J. DUNCAN examined.

36. *The Chairman.*] You acted as auctioneer at this sale?—Yes.

37. There is a petition before the Committee in which it is stated that you, authorized by the Colonial Secretary, promised that the roads on the reclaimed land would be made, metalled, and formed by the Government. Did you receive instructions to make any such statement?—I may say that at this sale there was an unusually large attendance, and I had to wait until one of the Ministers came down to attend the sale. Sir George Grey was to have been present, but he did not come. However, the Colonial Secretary, Colonel Whitmore, was there, and as I was about to commence the sale I was requested by several of the audience to state whether the streets would be made by the Government. I then put the question to the Colonial Secretary, and he informed me that I might state that the streets would be made. I then said the streets would be thoroughly made, and not in the wretched way in which they would have been made by the Provincial Government.

38. Did you place this on record in your report to the Government?—No; I gave the Government the account sales, and nothing further was necessary.

39. Is it not usual for the auctioneer to get from the Government information as to what he has to do, and to report what he has done afterwards?—I have never been asked to make such a report.

40. You made a promise on behalf of the Government without making any record of it?—Yes; it was not considered necessary to make any record of it. There were several Under-Secretaries present at the sale. Messrs. Seed, Elliot, and Batkin were present.

41. Did they hear you make this statement?—I cannot say; but I have no doubt that everyone heard what I said.

42. *Mr. Swanson.*] Did Colonel Whitmore tell you to say that the streets would be made in a better style than they would have been made by the Provincial Government?—He heard the question which was asked, and told me to reply that the Government would make the streets.

43. And if anybody comes here and tells us that he heard Colonel Whitmore say that the work would not be done in a half-and-half way, are we to believe him?—Colonel Whitmore told me that the streets would be made.

44. Did he promise that the streets would be thoroughly "made," or thoroughly "formed"?—I cannot recollect the exact words; but I took care to impress upon the buyers that they would gain by the promise which had been made.

45. *Mr. W. C. Buchanan.*] Did you try to convey to the people who were present that the footpaths, kerbing, channelling, forming, and making should be done?—What I wished to convey was that the streets would be thoroughly finished in a first-class manner. That statement must have brought in thousands of pounds to the Government more than they would have got for the land.

THURSDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER, 1882.

Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE examined.

46. *The Chairman.*] You are acquainted with the prayers of this petition?—Yes. The point is about the metalling of the streets. I was asked by the auctioneer to attend the sale, as he said it would perhaps improve it, and as Mr. Macandrew was away I went. Just before the sale began the auctioneer leaned down to me and asked if the Government would guarantee to form the streets. I asked why Government should do so, and he said in all probability it would add two or three pounds to the price, upon which I said, "You may announce that the Government will form the streets." Upon this there was a babel of voices asking me, "What does forming mean? Will you put down metal; will you make the