

Brassey—2 acres 1 rood 6 perches. The value in 1882 was estimated at £1,500; in 1885, £2,000. Mr. Brassey himself has returned the value at £2,500.

1773. Is that near Stark's?—Distant about the eighth of a mile.

1774. About ten chains?—Yes.

1775. Is it near Professor Brown's?—It is the property that Professor Brown occupies. Mr. Brassey is the owner.

1776. Will you give us the valuation of North Head?—My valuation of the Defence Reserve at the North Head, Devonport, was as follows: Allotment 38, twenty-five acres, £11,250, less, for defence-works in progress, £5,000, being £6,250, or £250 per acre, and not at all adapted for building-purposes.

APPENDIX.

Memorandum for Mr. Sperrey.—The Public Accounts Committee wish to know when Mr. Allison was appointed Property-tax Reviewer in Auckland; for what district he is appointed; on whose recommendation; what other Reviewers were appointed with him; and what other gentlemen were recommended, and by whom. Will you be good enough to let me have the information?—F. J. Moss, Chairman.—1st July, 1886.

Auckland, 12th March, 1886.—Mr. Thomas Seaman, Assessor, Auckland.—Will you be good enough to give me a copy of the entry in your rough note-book, assessing the property Mr. Stark sold the Government, and at the same time state your reasons for valuing the property at the sum at which it is assessed. Will you state whether the property is assessed at the same value as similar land in the locality. I should be glad to receive a somewhat full report from you.—CHAS. M. CROMBIE, Deputy Property-tax Commissioner.

31, New Zealand Insurance Buildings, Auckland, 15th March, 1886.—C. M. Crombie, Esq., Deputy Property-tax Commissioner.—Sir,—In compliance with your request, I forward herewith the few objections which I had not returned to Wellington. The objections of Mr. Alison (one of the Reviewers) and his friends will not, I find, be defended. I have also the honour to report as follows *re* the valuation of Mr. Stark's property, the objections to which have, I have no doubt, a political significance, that gentleman having announced his candidature for a seat in the House of Representative as a supporter of the present Government: A 90/15, Stark, R. A. M.; 3 and part 4, Takapuna, &c., 30 acres 1 rood 18 perches, £15,600; dwellings and all other improvements, £4,400; leaving the land at about £365 per acre. In this valuation, in addition to my own opinion of its value, I was guided by the following circumstances: Mr. Stark had, within a short period of my assessment, received a private offer of £16,000 for the whole estate; and an offer had also been made through an agent of £450 per acre for six acres of the unimproved and least valuable part; but, declining these offers, the proprietor had decided on cutting up the property into 162 sections, for which plans had at considerable expense been prepared. These sections show 8,300ft. of frontage, which, at an average of £2 per foot (some considerable portion of which would doubtless bring double that amount), would yield £16,600, to which add the buildings, which are of a costly nature: it would be between £19,000 and £20,000; and, with such a prospect, the owner agreed with me that both the Government and the local bodies should have the benefit for the purpose of taxation. With regard to other properties in the vicinity, my assessment will show that several are equal and others higher in value, although they do not occupy such commanding positions for building-sites. Part of same No. 4, Mr. Hammond, £1,000 for three and a half acres. This I did not consider so valuable as the above; but the owner has told me this day that he is wishing to sell it, but not for less than £1,500—or, he is asking £4 per foot for frontage. Part of No. 6, 4 acres and 14 perches, is valued at £1,320; not near so good a site, and without improvements. And another part of same lot, 6 acres 3 roods, £3,000. Many other instances I could refer to, but trust I have said sufficient *re* my valuation to justify it in the estimation of both the Commissioner and yourself. One other remark I will make, and that in consequence of certain insinuations which I have heard. When assessing Mr. Stark's property I had no idea that the Government at all contemplated taking the same, either for defence or any other purposes.—I have, &c., THOMAS SEAMAN, Property Assessor.

Auckland, 18th March, 1886.—Mr. Thomas Seaman, Assessor, Auckland.—I have received your letter of the 15th, and should like some further information. Please state the name of the person by whom the offer of £16,000 for Mr. Stark's property was made, and give any further circumstances in connection with the offer you may be aware of; also the name of the agent who offered £450 per acre for six acres, and state what part of the estate was included in the six acres. Are you of opinion that the 162 sections would have sold at an average of £2 per foot frontage? Do you consider the buildings and other improvements value for £4,400, and what part of this represents the value of the buildings? Will you be good enough to explain the meaning of the following: "With such a prospect the owner agreed with me that both the Government and local bodies should have the benefit for the purpose of taxation." I should like a sketch of land in the vicinity, with the values noted on it.—CHAS. M. CROMBIE, Deputy Commissioner.

Auckland, 23rd March, 1886.—Mr. Thomas Seaman, Assessor, Auckland.—Will you be good enough to let me have, not later than to-morrow (Wednesday), an answer to my memorandum of the 18th *re* the assessment of Stark's property?—CHARLES M. CROMBIE, Deputy Commissioner.

31, New Zealand Insurance Buildings, Auckland, 24th March, 1886.—C. M. Crombie, Esq., Deputy Property-tax Commissioner.—Sir,—I have the honour to reply to yours of the 18th instant *re* the valuation of Mr. Stark's property. (1.) After making a careful survey of the property, and eliciting what information regarding the cost of improvements, &c., I felt at liberty to do, on arriving at my valuation of £15,600 the owner remarked that he could not object to that value, having had a *bonâ fide* offer of £16,000, and that by one of the most respectable estate-agents in Auckland; but I was not told who the agent was, nor the name of his client, and I did not feel that I should be justified in asking for that information. I have, however, been told recently by one of Auckland's leading public men, but in confidence, that he had seen the offer of £16,000, in writing, addressed to Mr. Stark, and was told that the offer was declined as being below its value. (2.) I was also told in confidence by another leading business gentleman that he knew of an offer having been made by a highly-reputed agent on behalf of a gentleman in Australia of £450 per acre for six acres of the northern portion of the land, or that sloping towards the narrow neck, and which has no buildings thereon. (3.) If cut up as has been proposed, and as shown on plan, I believe many of the sections with sea-frontage would fetch from £4 to £5 per foot, others with main-road frontage from £2 to £2 10s. per foot, and the balance at such prices as would realize on the estate an average of £2 per foot. (4.) I consider the improvements to be fairly valued at £4,400, the houses and other buildings £3,250, and the balance for fencing, draining, planting, and general laying-out of the estate. (5.) The remark as to giving the Government and local bodies the benefit of a full but fair valuation for the purposes of taxation in the assessment of this as well as all other properties that have come under my notice I considered to be the principle on which, as an Assessor, I was expected to act. I will endeavour to procure for you as early as possible a sketch of the adjacent lands.—I have, &c., THOMAS SEAMAN, Assessor.

Armidale, Devonport, Auckland, 18th June, 1886.—*Re* Stark's property.—T. Peacock, Esq.—Dear Sir,—I should not have referred to this matter had not my name been mentioned in the *Star* of this evening as having written the Government respecting the purchase of Mr. Stark's property for defensive purposes. It states there, "I would refer