

13th July, 1886.—To Professor Thomas, Devonport.—The following has been reported to the Public Accounts Committee: "Professor Thomas has a property with a good substantial house, containing fourteen rooms, erected thereon, and grounds beautifully laid out. For this property the Professor paid £1,600, and has expended about £300 upon it, and now offers to sell it for £1,800, and would, in all probability, take £1,700 for it. The house cost about £900 to build." Will you kindly say if this is correct? Reply paid.—F. J. Moss, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee.

13th July, 1886.—To Mr. R. J. Roberts, Devonport.—*Re Stark's purchase*: It is stated to the Committee that in March, 1884, E. W. Allison offered you ten acres, containing all the buildings and improvements, for £3,500, or the buildings and five acres for £3,000; and that this was pressed upon you with great pertinacity. Be kind enough to say if this is correct; and, if incorrect, in what particular. Reply paid.—F. J. Moss, Chairman.

Devonport, 14th July, 1886.—Mr. Moss, Wellington.—Mr. E. W. Allison offered to me, for Mr. Le Bailley, the ten acres with house and out-buildings for £3,500 in March, 1884, but not the five acres for £3,000, and did not use more than ordinary business pressure; but the offer was declined for a better piece in the neighbourhood.—R. J. ROBERTS.

Rotorua, 14th July, 1886.—F. J. Moss, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, Wellington.—When buying the property was told the house cost £800 to build; have since spent £150 in improvements. Have offered to sell the property for £1,800, but have not said that I would take £1,700. Rest of statement correct.—A. P. THOMAS.

In the Defence Office is a plan of Takapuna Point, prepared for defence purposes by the Public Works Department in June, 1884, by direction of Major Cautley. His Excellency gave a lecture on the 4th October, 1884, in which he stated, "It would be advisable also to place a battery on Takapuna Head." The Defence Department, however, did nothing further in the matter till December, 1885, when the land was entered upon, by authority of the Hon. the Minister for Public Works, in consequence of application of the Mayor, to find employment for the unemployed. Some months prior to this Major Boddaun had been at the intended battery-site with Mr. Vickerman, of the Public Works Department, and drove in two pegs to mark the spot where the guns would ultimately be placed, in order to facilitate the making of the necessary plans prior to beginning work on the battery. There has been no formal Proclamation of the intention of the Government to take this land for defence purposes. The correspondence herewith begins with Mr. Stark's telegram asking, as the Government have entered upon possession, to be informed if it was their intention to arrange the purchase privately or otherwise. This telegram is dated the 22nd December, 1885.—G. S. WHITMORE.

July 13th, 1886.—F. J. Moss, Esq.—Dear Sir,—My impression being that in my evidence yesterday I stated that the valuation of Devonport District as a whole had doubled since 1882, permit me to state that I find, on inspecting the valuation rolls in the hands of the Property-tax Commissioner, that the exact difference is thus: 1882, £206,058; 1885, £408,513—thus being nearly double. I also stated that my valuation for 1882 was not accepted by the Devonport Road Board, the reason assigned being that my assessment was in many instances much too low, and would therefore not realize a sufficient amount of rates. I find, however, that in the local valuation, whilst a few only were increased, a very great many were decreased; so that their total valuation was £204,539, against mine for £206,058.—I have, &c., THOMAS SEAMAN.

62, Queen Street (opposite Bank of New Zealand), Auckland, 8th January, 1886.—H. M. Brewer, Esq., Public Works Office.—Dear Sir,—I have a section at the North Shore which may suit your views. It is nearly an acre and a half in extent, has frontage to Clarence Road of 173ft., the lower part is about 300ft. from Beach Road, and the first wharf is within seven minutes' walk; the ground has some hundred and fifty shelter-trees planted, besides fruit-trees and fancy shrubs; the walks are laid-out and scoriaed, and the whole is fenced and ready for building. As a site for a gentleman's residence it is unrivalled, and as a speculation it should pay, as it can be cut up into eight smaller allotments at a profit of some £200 or £300 on the £1,200 asked for it. Should you care to take only half of it, I have a professional man willing to take the other half. Terms may be arranged if it suits you.—I have, &c., W. J. SULLIVAN.

John Ross, Esq., Sargood and Co., Auckland.—It has been stated to Committee that you were not in Auckland between Christmas and 20th January. Committee wish to know if correct, and, if so, when away.—F. J. Moss, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee.

Wm. Aitken, Esq., Auckland.—Mr. Brewer has stated that he heard you had given a valuation of £18,000 for Stark's land at Takapuna Point during the time the Minister for Public Works was in Auckland. That the valuation was given to Minister for Public Works. The Committee wish to know if that statement or any part of it is correct.—F. J. Moss, Chairman of Public Accounts Committee.

Auckland, 20th January, 1886.—H. M. Brewer, Esq., Land Purchase Agent.—Sir,—I beg to inform you that I saw the Hon. the Minister for Public Works, Mr. Richardson, yesterday, and he informed me the Government would not give me the amount I claim—viz., £20,000, but they were prepared to give me 10 per cent. above the property-tax valuation—viz., £17,160, which sum I agreed to accept.—I have, &c., R. A. M. STARK.

Auckland, 15th July, 1886.—F. J. Moss, M.H.R., Wellington.—I stated that Stark's property was subdivided into 162 allotments, which, if sold at the same rate as land in the district, and including house, would have realized eighteen thousand pounds. I furnished Mr. Brewer with particulars of all land sold in allotments near to Stark's; in nearly every case the price is in excess of that obtained by Stark. Ask Brewer to show you this.—W. AITKEN.

R. J. Roberts, Esq., Devonport.—Please say if Allison's offer was in writing, or what proof you have of its having been made. Reply paid.

Auckland, 16th July, 1886.—F. J. Moss, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington.—Telegram vague—no year mentioned. You have, however, been misinformed, and, should say, knowingly. I arrived in Auckland Christmas morning, 1882, and since then have not been absent from Auckland between Christmas and 20th January of any year. Besides, as already wired you, negotiation with Stark was in May, 1884.—JOHN ROSS.

Auckland, 16th July, 1886.—F. J. Moss, Chairman of Public Accounts Committee, Wellington.—My only proofs are that the offer is written in my diary by myself. Mr. Le Bailley will prove that I conveyed to him the offer. I do not remember Mr. Alison giving the offer in his own handwriting.—G. J. ROBERTS.

19th July, 1886.—A. Alison, jun., Devonport.—The Public Accounts Committee wish you to say if Stark's property at Takapuna Point was ever in the hands of Alison Brothers or on their books for sale. Reply paid.—F. J. Moss, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee.

19th July, 1886.—T. L. White, Esq., Auckland.—Evidence before Public Accounts Committee states that you offered Stark's property to Mr. Cooper for £5,000. The Committee request you will be good enough to state if this is correct or if you had authority from Stark to sell at any other time or price. Reply paid.—F. J. Moss, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee.

19th July, 1886.—T. Cooper, Esq., Devore and Cooper, Auckland.—Evidence before Public Accounts Committee states that you were offered Stark's property, Takapuna Point, for £5,000, by T. L. White. Committee request you will be good enough to state if this is correct; and, if not, whether, and when, and at what price, offered it by any one else. Reply paid.—F. J. Moss, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee.