

263. Such prices could not be got in cash?—No.

264. Have you ever acted as Assessor in a Compensation Court?—No.

265. If you were called upon so to act would you consider it to be your duty to take into consideration the cash value as well as the speculative value based on the credit sales I have named?—If my business was to arrive at the real value, I should not take into account the speculative value at all, except such as I have described now—that is, if you are asking me about the speculative value got by cutting the property up into these small lots: you see values have to be taken in various ways.

266. You know what the Compensation Court is—a Judge and two Assessors, who have been appointed to arrive at the real value of lands that have been taken under the Public Works Act?—Yes.

267. These two Assessors are usually experts as you yourself are, and, if you were called upon to act as Assessor under the Public Works Act, would you feel justified in taking the purely speculative sales into consideration, or would you not rather be influenced by absolute cash sales or cash values?—What I should be obliged to take into account as valuator would be this: the Government propose to take a man's property from him; well, I have a right not only to take into account what its present cash value is, but what may be the prospective value of that land during the next four or five years, and to allow him, not the whole, but some portion of that prospective value. As to the proportion, every property has to stand on its own particular merits, and that is where the skill of the valuator comes in.

268. If you had evidence brought before you of sales of properties similarly situated in the same district, would it not weigh with you very much whether these sales were for cash or on long speculative terms?—Clearly that would influence the value. Suppose a case like this: a piece of land is sold for £100, all the cash the owner receives is perhaps £5 or £10. Now, this is not a sale at all, because the probability is that the land will come back to the man again: he has no real security. I cannot recognize anything as a sale if the seller has not got *bonâ fide* security that the sale will be carried out.

269. Can you say approximately what is the difference between a property sold by auction or by careful negotiation for absolute cash, and the value which it would bring for merely a nominal cash payment, and the balance of the purchase-money to remain at a low rate of interest?—On the latter terms you propose the property would certainly realize 50 per cent. less than it would for cash without any qualification. I think you may take it as a general rule that an owner, by giving liberal terms, and taking a small payment in cash, will get more by 50 per cent. than he could expect to get for cash.

270. Do you know if this Takapuna property has been in the market for sale?—Yes; Stark spoke to me about it one time himself, and told me to bear it in mind if any buyer cropped up. I asked him in whose hands it was for sale, and he named several people. I told him that we would not take it in hand. We make it a rule not to book any property except on written instructions.

271. Do you know the prices quoted?—I hardly like to be positive about it, but the general impression left on my mind is that the value was about £5,000 or £6,000.

272. Can you account for the difference in the property-tax valuation and the value you are putting on it now?—I can only account for it in this way: that, like a good many more of Mr. Seaman's valuations, it was a very wild one.

273. Of course, if he valued it at £15,000, the owner would have an opportunity of appealing against the valuation?—Yes, if he wanted to do so.

274. You think that if it had not been likely that the Government would want to acquire this site he would have appealed?—It is most probable.

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MONDAY, 12TH JULY, 1886.

Mr. T. SEAMAN examined.

275. *The Chairman.*] Will you be good enough to state your position?—I am an estate-agent in Auckland, and have been assessor for the Government on the last three occasions—on the first occasion for the land-tax valuation, and on the two last occasions for the property-tax.

276. Do you know the property sold by Mr. Stark to the Government?—I do.

277. Will you describe where it is situated?—It is situated in the Borough of Devonport, about a mile from the wharf.

278. The property was valued by you in 1882 at £3,500?—No. During my interview with Mr. Sperrey I discovered a clerical error in the valuation for that year. It stands in the copy of my note-book at £4,500; it should have been £7,500. The error occurred in this way: The property was valued in two lines; the first, containing about fourteen acres, on which the building stood, was set down at £4,500; the second line, comprising the balance, of about twenty-eight acres, was set down at £3,000. In entering them up in the fair copy sent to Wellington, by my instructions, my clerk added the numbers and areas together, but I found out only last Friday that he had omitted to add together the valuations. It should have been £7,500 for the 42 acres 3 roods 8 perches.

279. Were the house and buildings on the ground then?—Yes.

280. Then the buildings and the forty-two acres, you say, were valued then at £7,500?—Yes.

281. On what amount were rates paid from 1882?—In 1882 the Devonport Road Board did not accept my valuation. I valued for the whole County of Waitemata, and all the other districts accepted my valuation; but the Devonport Road Board said I had not made a sufficiently high valuation: they therefore, according to the provisions of the Act, appointed their own valuer, and it has been on his valuation the rates have been levied.