

282. Who was the valuer?—Mr. Tanner, clerk to the Devonport Ferry Company, and house-agent.

283. Did Mr. Tanner value the property separately?—He valued it as a whole—forty-two acres, &c.

284. And the value really was £7,500?—Yes. It was not until I saw some telegrams in the papers referring to a letter written either to Mr. Sperrey or to the Government by Mr. Mason, in which he spoke of the property as having stood in the rate-books as valued at £3,000, that I was aware that this was the case.

285. You discovered your error between £7,500 and £4,500 from your rough note-book?—Yes, on Friday last, with Mr. Sperrey.

286. Did Mr. Sperrey ask you to send your rough note-book down some time since?—Not my rough note-book. A fair copy written up from my rough note-book was sent.

287. I think, in the correspondence there is a telegram from Mr. Sperrey to you asking you to send your rough note-book?—I am not aware of receiving such a telegram. I had a communication from Mr. Crombie, asking for information, and requesting me to send “a copy of the entry in my note-book”—that was on the 12th March.

288. How much was the house and twenty-eight acres valued at in 1882?—No. 1, part 4, containing fourteen acres and odd, including the house, was valued at £4,500; and No. 5 in the note-book, allotment 3, part 1, containing twenty-eight acres, was valued at £3,000. The forty-two acres contained lots part 1, 3, and part 4, on the map. Subsequently Mr. Stark sold, I think, twelve acres to Mr. Hull, on the side of the road which slopes down to the swamp, retaining all the sea-frontage.

289. I want to get at the value of the house and twenty-eight acres. You state the house and fourteen acres were valued at £4,500: what was the value of the additional fourteen acres at the time?—I should think the other fourteen acres would be worth from £1,600 to £1,800.

290. Then the house and twenty-eight acres in 1882 would be worth from £6,100 to £6,300?—No; from £5,700 to £5,900.

291. And in 1885 you valued them at £15,600?—Yes.

292. Can you state the reason for the increase?—It was the general increase throughout the whole district, as is shown by the present valuation and the rates that will be realized. Taking the district as a whole, it has, I believe, more than doubled its value. I may say that, before commencing my valuation, I went very carefully through the whole district, and, without saying anything to the owners, made a careful note of the value of each property—taking the land, buildings, improvements, and everything. I had not intended to take Devonport at that time, but desired to take the out-districts first; but I was waited upon by Mr. Quick, who said he was going to England, and would like to see the valuation of his property before he went. I consented to do so. Subsequently Mr. Stark also said he was leaving shortly, and would like to have his property valued. I do not remember the precise date, but think it was either the beginning of November or end of October last. I told him that, having formed my opinion of the value of all the properties about there, I was prepared to meet him.

293. Had Mr. Quick mentioned this to Mr. Stark?—I am not aware that Mr. Quick had heard from Mr. Stark. I went very carefully through the property with Mr. Stark, taking the values I had in my mind and notes, and told him I thought it was worth £15,600. He said that he could not object to my valuation, and asked me if I had any idea that he had had an offer for the property. I said that was the first intimation I had of it. He then told me that he had a *bonâ fide* offer of £16,000 for the property, and that if I desired he would show me the offer. I replied that I would not question his word, and that it was satisfactory to me as an assessor to know that I had not made an excessive valuation. He said he could not call it excessive, and that if I liked I could make it £16,000. This I declined to do.

294. Is it usual with people you assess that they want to increase the valuation?—No: it is generally the other way.

295. Mr. Sperrey sent you a telegram on the 13th January asking you if you were sure of your valuation: would you have been prepared to swear at that time in a Compensation Court that the property was fairly valued?—Certainly. I consider it was worth fully £15,600.

296. That is, to sell in one block?—Yes.

297. In your communications to the Government you say that the property is of much greater value for cutting up and selling in detail?—Mr. Stark told me that he had refused the offer which he had, and proposed to cut up the property into a large number of sections, being quite satisfied that he would get more for it in that way, and said he would furnish me with a plan on which he proposed to cut it up. I have that plan here.

298. What was the date of that?—I do not remember the exact date.

299. Had you communicated with any one else before that except with Mr. Quick about the valuation?—No one else. This was my calculation: He proposed to cut the property into 162 lots, which would give 8,300ft. frontage, which I calculated to be worth on an average £2 10s. a foot, and I consider that a very low estimate. At that rate it would have realized £20,750, to which I add the buildings and improvements. I considered that if the property was cut up these might not be worth so much as I had valued them at before; so I put them down at £2,650 instead of £4,400—making the total value of the property to be £23,400.

300. That was the gross value?—Yes.

301. Can you mention any sales effected at this price of £2 10s. per foot?—Yes—Mr. Hull's property, at from £1 10s. to £2; and some properties near at hand are not to be had under £4, £6, and £8 per foot.

302. Are there many allotments sold at those prices?—There are not many sold; but Mr. Hull is asking from £1 5s. to £2, and is not, I believe, prepared to sell at a reduced price. He recently