

is not to be bought at Devonport less than from £6 to £10 per foot; and I consider some of Mr. Stark's property, with a beach-frontage, would fetch £5 per foot. I took it at an average of £2 10s. all round.

329. *The Chairman.*] What is the distance from Professor Thomas's to Mr. Stark's?—There is only one small allotment between. I cannot tell the exact number of chains.

330. Are there any other lands you can speak of as having been sold?—Part of the land now held by Mr. Le Bailley in 1882 belonged to Mrs. J. B. Russell. It was about six and a half acres, and had a house on it which is since burned down. The property was then valued at £2,500. A house of about the same value has been erected; and part of the property—about four acres—is now valued to Mr. Le Bailley at £3,500, and the balance to Mrs. Russell at £1,000—that is, £4,500, instead of £2,500 in 1882 for the same area precisely.

331. Do you think that if Mr. Stark's house and ten acres were offered to Mr. Le Bailley for £3,000 he would prefer to give the money for the land which he has now?—I should require very good authority to believe that he would do so.

332. You think that ten acres and the house would be worth a great deal more?—Yes. Mr. Stark's two houses alone cost over £3,000, I believe. I valued them at £3,200. They are beautifully fitted up.

333. The Committee are also informed that the property was under offer to Mr. Ross in 1884 for £3,000?—I certainly never heard of it.

334. Are there any other properties that you know of as having been sold?—There are properties close by—at Mount Cambria, for instance. Allotment 6 on the map, 11 acres 1 rood 12 perches, valued in 1882 at £1,690. It then belonged to Messrs. Hay, Judge Gillies, and the Rev. David Bruce. They sold it to a syndicate—Mr. McLeod and others—for £4,750 about two years after my valuation. Mr. McLeod next sold to Mr. Kingsford 4 acres 2 roods 1 perch for £1,320. He sold two other sections to Mr. Brown, 166ft. and 51ft. frontages by about 100ft., for £700. He sold another section, 51ft. frontage, for £200; and the balance, of 6 acres 3 roods, I valued to Mr. McLeod and friends in 1885 at £3,000, or £475 per acre—which they did not at all object to, but considered the valuation fair.

335. The Committee are also informed that Mr. Kingsford was offered Mr. Stark's property, but that he preferred purchasing this other?—I do not know of any offer to Mr. Kingsford. I should say the land he has is not to be compared to Mr. Stark's.

336. Is not its position better?—It is a little nearer Devonport—from five to seven minutes' walk, I should say.

337. Is it not volcanic soil?—Yes. Some people prefer volcanic soil, but some also prefer clay. There have been recent sales of this property. The first was at £6 per foot, equal to £2,100 per acre. The next sections, 2, 3, 4, were sold for £5 per foot, or £1,750 per acre; the next section, No. 5, at £3 17s. 6d. per foot, or £1,356 per acre; the next, £3 15s. per foot, or £1,312 per acre; the next at £3 17s. 6d. per foot, or £1,356 per acre; the next at £3 2s. 6d. per foot, or £1,100 per acre; and the last, No. 13, at £4 17s. 6d. per foot, or £1,706 per acre.

338. Are these all sales?—Yes—auction sales.

339. Do you know them to be *bonâ fide* sales?—I have no reason to question it. They were, some of them, given to me by Mr. McLeod himself.

340. Is not Mount Cambria in the most thickly-peopled part of Devonport?—No. [Explains position on map.]

341. What is the size of these allotments?—49ft. and 50ft. by 120ft.

342. Do you think, if Mr. Stark's property was cut up into such sections, would there be any prospect of selling them?—Undoubtedly there would. I believe they would command higher prices than some of the properties I have been speaking of. Before I left Auckland an estate-agent (Mr. Frater) said, "What is all this I hear about the purchase of Mr. Stark's property?" I told him that it was said that the Government gave a great deal too much for it. He said, "If I had been Mr. Stark I would have asked £50,000. It is a most valuable property." Then, there is the Hastings property, which has been cut up. It is twenty acres, and in 1882 I valued it at £1,600. Two years after it was purchased by Messrs. Duder Brothers for £6,000.

343. Have they sold any of it?—A great deal of it—at very much advanced prices; and, notwithstanding that they have sold some thousands of pounds' worth, I valued the balance in 1885 at £6,000.

344. Do you value these properties at the cash values?—Yes. Those are the instructions we have received from the Government.

345. And such valuation you would be prepared to swear to in a Compensation Court?—Yes.

346. Can you tell the Committee of any sales of land nearer to Mr. Stark's property?—There was Mr. Hull's property, on the opposite side of the road, sold to Messrs. Sturtevant, Kennedy, and King, in one case at £450 an acre, in another at £750 an acre, and two sections at the back of the block at £280 and £200 an acre.

347. These sales have actually been made?—Yes.

348. Do you consider them fair cash values?—Yes; and I valued the balance of Mr. Hull's property, 9 acres 3 roods 2 perches, at £2,000.

349. Has not Mrs. Burgess ten acres near there?—Yes; it is on the same side as Mr. Hull's—the next property.

350. What is that valued at?—I valued it at £1,000 as a whole; not for the purpose of cutting up.

351. Is the land worth less than Mr. Hull's?—Yes; because from Mrs. Burgess's you can get no sea-view. It is generally let for grazing, and is not so saleable a property for cutting up.

352. Does not that apply to some of Mr. Stark's property also?—No; it is so high that you cannot lose the sea-view.