

13. Have you any recollection of whether the lands treated as available for allocation included lands on the eastern side of the Tararua Range?—I have a distinct recollection that it did not. When I say a distinct recollection, I mean a distinct recollection that the Minister of Lands at the time, Mr. Rolleston, would not allow any lands on the east side of the range, commonly known as the Forty-mile Bush, to be included.

14. Is not the Makakahi land on the east side, between the Forest Reserve and the fifteen-mile limit?—Yes.

15. According to this return they appear to be valued. They are included in the return of the lands within the fifteen miles of the West Coast Railway, and actually valued?—I think, now you are going over this ground, that this must have been a preliminary return showing all the lands that were within the fifteen-miles district; but this is merely a preliminary return, and the actual thing that was agreed upon ultimately between the Minister of Lands and the company as to what was to be valued is set forth in the schedule to the contract. I remember now distinctly that the Minister made a most decided stand upon that point, and that he would not allow any land in the Forty-mile Bush.

16. Have you any recollection of having valued these lands with Mr. Linton?—No; my recollection is that we did not value the lands in the Forty-mile Bush; but that we simply valued the lands that are now scheduled to the contract. I just took a note of them before I came over. The total value of the lands was £96,570, that was the ultimate value, and these were the lands that were scheduled in the contract that the Minister of the day agreed with the company should be scheduled for valuation.

17. There is two hundred thousand odd acres in that land?—Yes, that is actually in the contract. You will find it in the schedule to the contract.

18. Was not a return made, as a matter of fact, by you to the Government of lands available, with their valuations? I may mention to you that this copy was supplied to us from your department as a return?—I will tell you what I remember now. I remember that before this was gone into at all, the Government, or rather the Minister of Lands, Mr. Rolleston, was asking all about these values, and, with the aid of the Chief Surveyor of the district, we made a schedule, with a series of values to them, but that was before the land was examined on the spot, in the regular manner. It was simply to give him an idea or rough guide as to how much land there was, and what might be the possible value. It was not of an authoritative nature. I think I can recollect too that, seeing I was named in the statute as valuer, I was very careful not to commit myself as to the value given.

19. I may at once state that we do not question that point at all. What I ask is, whether or not that return of Crown lands was made in the first instance in connection with the proposed construction of this railway—whether it did not include lands on the eastern side of the Tararua Range?—My recollection is that the Minister was supplied with a list of all the lands within the fifteen miles, and he then took a most decided stand that no lands on the eastern side—no flat lands—should be taken.

20. That is what we understand; but these lands were within the fifteen-mile area, and the return gave such in the first instance, I presume?—Yes, that information was supplied to the Minister.

21. Now, I would ask you again; just tax your recollection whether or not?—Just let me explain to the Committee for a moment. I was summoned to this Committee to give evidence, but I was not told upon what subject I was to give evidence. It was only an hour ago that I was speaking to an officer of the department, and said I was summoned to the Waste Lands Committee, and asked him if he knew what it was about. He said, "The Manawatu Railway business, I suppose;" and I have just scampered through the papers since then.

22. I am not finding fault at all, Sir. I would ask you to try and tax your memory whether or not, if your recollection carries you so far, lands on the eastern side were not valued by yourself in the first instance, which were subsequently excluded?—No, they were not; that is my firm recollection.

23. I am sorry, but Mr. Linton will say differently?—No, I can recollect very distinctly in this way, that we devoted a week to it. It was just between Christmas and New Year, 1881, and we rode over the ground from Palmerston across the Manawatu, and going in from the sandhills at the nearest points, and working down to Otaki, and from there we took coach, arriving in Wellington late on Saturday night.

24. And then may I ask how it was that this return came from the department?—I do not bind myself; I do not know how it was made up. My own surmise is, that it was made up as a sort of preliminary guide for the Minister as to what the values might be.

25. No, Sir; it is headed, "Return of Crown lands within fifteen miles of the West Coast Railway"?—Of course, if the Committee wish, I will try and trace its origin: if it was given to the Minister, there would be the original or a copy of it in the books, which could be seen.

26. Yes. Would you be good enough to see if there is a copy of this and the covering letter? [To the Chairman]. I think, Mr. Chairman, that I addressed a letter to you, in which I asked for all papers. I did not know what the formal course was, but I asked that the Clerk should give notice to the Government to produce these very documents.

27. *The Chairman.* [Perhaps, Mr. McKerrow, you may find them amongst these papers [produced]?—No; it is not here. Probably it will be in the Survey Department.

28. *Mr. Travers.* I have already stated to the Committee that we knew these lands were afterwards excluded from the allocation area?—I remember all about this schedule to the contract, and that these were all passed, and I have a very distinct recollection about the decided stand the Minister took about the Forty-mile Bush.

29. What I understand is this: That these lands were within the fifteen-mile area, and were excluded from the allocation area by the Government?—Yes.