

such land." On the "improved value" of the land: do you know what that means?—As it stands now.

2696. Did you or not after 1884 know that that was in this Act?—I suppose I did.

2697. You said you made improvements on the strength of what Mr. Mackay told you: did you expect that Parliament might pass something contradicting this Act, or that Government would act in contradiction to an Act of Parliament?—I do not know.

2698. You say you built a house: when?—Five years ago.

2699. In what year?—I suppose it would be at the end of 1884 or the beginning of 1885.

2700. Would you swear it was not in 1884?—I forget exactly the time when I started to build.

2701. Will you swear that it was not some time before December, 1884?—It was shortly after Mackay's meeting.

2702. Would you swear that it was after Mackay's meeting that you built?—Yes.

2703. Had you made any improvement on the land?—I had fenced it.

2704. Had you cleared it?—I had.

2705. How much was done?—None of it had been ploughed; it was in grass.

2706. Are you not aware that if you built a house on your land while this Act was in force that the rent of your new lease, computed on the improved value of the land, would be increased? You say that you knew that this Act says the rent of the new lease was to be computed on the improved value: did you not know you would have to pay a larger rent?—I understood the improvements were deducted.

2707. Do you mean that on the improved land the improvements were to be deducted?—Yes.

2708. Do you know Ross's property—Otauto?—I have been on it, but never over it. I have been as far as the house.

2709. Do you know the property adjoining his?—Yes.

2710. Do you know what is paid an acre for that?—No.

2711. Do you know the property of Mr. Valentine Smith?—Yes.

2712. *Mr. Tripp.*] Do you recollect everything that was said by Mr. Mackay?—Yes.

2713. And it was on the faith of what was said that you built?—Yes.

SATURDAY, 2ND AUGUST, 1890.

Mr. PERCIVAL WILSON, of Whenuakura, Patea, Farmer, examined.

2714. *Mr. Bell.*] You are one of the West Coast reserves confirmed-lease holders?—Yes.

2715. You have a partner, I believe?—Yes.

2716. How many leases have you?—Three.

2717. One expired last year?—Two are expired now.

2718. Since the passing of the Suspension Act?—One of them before and one after.

2719. You have been how long on the Coast?—Since 1874—fifteen years.

2720. Do you remember the date when confirmed leases were first taken up?—Yes.

2721. You have a general knowledge of the properties on the Coast?—Yes.

2722. Of course you have a knowledge of your own property?—Yes.

2723. And to a certain extent you are more or less prejudiced, being a leaseholder: will you tell the Committee your opinion as to whether the rents fixed by the arbitrators were fair and just generally?—I believe they have been.

2724. I want you to give one or two instances of the recent sales of leased property. I think there was a sale of Mr. Palmer's property; that was just about the time of the arbitration?—Yes; that is on the Whenuakura Block—on the same block as the two leases of Otautu and Gower's lease.

2725. What kind of property is it?—It is considered a good property; there is a little sand on it. It turns off more fat stock than any other in the district. It was sold for £7 an acre.

2726. Any others sold recently?—There are two or three instances where property has been put up and bid for, but not sold. Not quite so good perhaps is McLean's (1,000 acres), for which there was £5 bid at auction.

2727. There were two properties of Dr. Earl's?—They were sold for £6 an acre.

2728. Were those properties equal to the general run of properties on the Coast?—Yes; I know that was considered a very good place; generally so by the Natives. There was another by Mr. Thompson—Todd in occupation. He bought from Lowes, who, I believe, gave £15 an acre for it.

2729. How long ago was that?—About twelve years ago.

2730. Lowes got much more than he gave for it?—I believe that was the case; I could not say exactly.

2731. Do you know Bremer's lease, or Valentine Smith's lease?—I know Smith's lease.

2732. When was that taken?—About nine or ten years ago.

2733. Is there anything special about it?—It is a good grazing and agricultural property—a little above the average.

2734. Do you know if Smith is satisfied with his bargain?—I believe not. He thought the rent too high; he applied for a reduction.

2735. Did he get a reduction?—That I cannot say.

2736. Braithwaite's, from Donald Smith, was mentioned: do you know what has become of Braithwaite?—He has gone bankrupt.