

2737. What were his assets?—They were worth about 5s.
 2738. Generally speaking, has there not been a great fall in the value of property on the Coast?
 —Yes, a very heavy fall.
 2739. And in the value of stock?—Yes: the fall in stock produces the fall in property.
 2740. Both in the selling and letting value?—Yes.
 2741. To what extent?—From 20 to 40 per cent., I think.
 2742. *Mr. Levi.*] Do you know some land adjoining your own lease (section 415), formerly owned by one Morgan?—Yes.
 2743. Do you know if that was recently sold?—Yes.
 2744. To one Foy: do you know what he paid?—£6 an acre.
 2745. It is adjoining your own property?—Yes.
 2746. Is it similar land?—Yes: a little more level. There is not so much sand.
 2747. Do you know section 416, Wilkie's?—Yes.
 2748. Do you know that Wilkie recently bought it at Gower's land-sale?—It is six years ago.
 2749. What did he pay for it?—£4.
 2750. Was it four guineas?—I could not say. I think it was only £4
 2751. There is flax growing on your land?—Yes.
 2752. Do you get anything for it?—I have only got little for it so far.
 2753. How much?—£36.
 2754. How do you sell it?—To cut at so much a ton.
 2755. Do you know the adjoining section owned by Mr. Currie (section 414)?—Yes.
 2756. Do you know how much he pays for that?—Four shillings an acre. It has a very good frontage. It is not the same as mine.
 2757. What is the difference?—I should say that fully one-third of that land is high-class agricultural land.
 2758. How much of your piece is high-class agricultural land?—I should not say that any of it was from my experience of it.
 2759. You have had transactions with the Native delegate?—In paying rent, yes.
 2760. Through Mr. Fisher chiefly?—Yes.
 2761. Did you find him straightforward?—Yes.
 2762. It was a matter of convenience to him?—Yes.

WILLIAM GOWER, of Patea, Farmer, examined.

2763. *Mr. Bell.*] On one of your leases the rent has been very largely reduced. Are you in partnership with George Gower?—No.
 2764. Where is he?—He is at Home.
 2765. Do you know the land he occupies?—Yes.
 2766. How came he to take it at such a rent?—It was my younger brother Alfred that first took the land from the Natives. Everything was in a state of prosperity in the colony at that time. That was the reason he gave so much for it. I told him he was giving too much for it. He said he would try and go on with it; but he soon found out that he was losing money. My brother George then took it, and he has been losing money on it.
 2767. Is this plan [produced] a correct plan of the contour of that land?—Yes.
 2768. Do you remember the land that was put up adjoining it belonging to the University (the University Reserve)? Was that the same kind of land, or better, or worse?—It is better land: there is but light bush, and more available land in it.
 2769. What was the upset price?—At 6d. an acre.
 2770. When was that?—Two years ago.
 2771. What was the rent to your brother?—Tenpence-halfpenny per acre.
 2772. *Mr. Rennell.*] Do you consider that you have paid your rent up?—I pay under the award.
 2773. You are disputing the payment of the rent demanded of you?—Yes.
 2774. Did I make a demand for the rent due?—You demanded of me rent under the confirmed lease.
 2775. *Mr. Levi.*] You said the University land was better land than your brother's?—It is more available land, more open; there is not so much waste land in it.
 2776. Is there not bush on it?—There is 25 acres of grass on it.
 2777. And the rest is bush?—The rest is bush. It has about 60 acres of an old Native clearing—koromiko bush and fern.
 2778. Do you mean to say that it is better land because it has but light bush?—Yes.
 2779. *Hon. Captain Kenny.*] You mean better land because more easily cleared?—Yes.
 2780. But at the same time the quality of the soil is good?—Yes.
 2781. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Is it not usual that the land is good where the bush is heavy?—Yes. This is an old Native clearing.
 2781A. Is it not the case that on the tops of the hills, where the land is poor, the bush is light?—Not necessarily so.
 2782. *Mr. Parata.*] How many sheep will that country carry?—I think on the average it will carry about two sheep and a half to the acre.
 2783. How many will the land carry that your brother has?—About two sheep to the acre.
 2784. *Mr. Bell.*] On the cleared part?—Yes.
 2785. Will it carry the same amount of stock per acre?—I dare say it would, or very close on it.