

30. Do you know what proportion ultimately was ordered to be paid by the Maoris?—No. I was under the impression that in this case they would not have to pay anything.

31. You considered the rent too high, though you were arbitrator for the Maoris?—Yes, considerably too high.

32. How long have you been on that coast?—About seventeen years on that coast, about seven years in that district. I had been previously at Wanganui—about eighteen years altogether, I think. Previously to that I came from Hawke's Bay.

33. Were you farming all the time?—Yes.

34. Speaking generally of the rents that were paid on leases—leases arranged before 1883—do you say whether the rents were generally too high or otherwise?—About the years 1882 and 1883 there was a great land-fever up there. Every one rushed to meddle in land, myself among the number, unfortunately; so that both leaseholders and purchasers gave considerably more for land than the land was worth. That has been proved since over and over again.

35. What was the difference in the price of cattle per hundredweight, as compared with what it is now?—I could not say. One reason for there being such a land-fever was that freezing beef and mutton commenced in 1882, and people looked forward to getting large prices for their stock in sheep and cattle, which have not been realised.

36. Is this West Coast country on which sheep and cattle may be grown and bred?—Yes, they can be bred; but I do not consider it a good sheep country myself. It is too wet; there is no comparison between it and Hawke's Bay as a sheep country. Cattle do very well.

37. Then it is a good country for rearing cattle?—Yes; cattle do well.

38. Has there been a fall in the price of cattle?—Yes, a considerable fall in price; we had been selling at any price we could get; prices have been rather better the last three years. Last year we have been freezing and sending Home.

39. Assuming the rent at that time to have been fixed at a fair value, would you expect that the arbitrators, in determining what was to be a fair rent for the future, would reduce the rent?—I do not see how the arbitrators could do anything else.

40. Do you know the land between Waitotara and the Waingongoro, laid off in Native reserves?—Yes; I know a good many of them.

41. Do you know the rents which have been fixed by arbitrations for that land?—Yes; but I could not say what they are just now.

42. Generally do you know what rents have been fixed?—I have heard of them, but I cannot say I know generally.

43. Can you give an opinion, as to whether the rents you know of are too low?—No; round about Hawera I should say they were fair rents.

44. These are the leases you know of?—Yes.

45. Do you know the rents generally under the confirmed leases?—Yes.

46. Were they too high or too low?—They were all too high. In point of fact, it was impossible to live on them, if they were to continue to pay the rent.

47. When you are valuing land for the purpose of these Maori leaseholds, do you base your estimate upon the capital value of the land?—Yes.

48. When was the last valuation?—About eighteen months ago.

49. You valued on that occasion?—Yes.

50. Did you also value on the previous occasion, three years before?—No, that was the first.

51. Did you value between Waitotara?—No; between Waingongoro and South down to the Patea boundary.

52. So that you are able to say that these valuations are fair valuations on the capital value of the land?—Yes; I am quite prepared to say that. I think the Property-Tax Department would bear me out.

53. These valuations were made, of course, before this arbitration?—I believe they were: a month or two before, if I remember right.

54. The last valuations were made in December?—Yes.

55. You valued for October?—Yes; that would be the previous October.

56. *Mr. Levi.*] What was the date of the land-fever you mentioned?—1882 or 1883; but about the latter period, I think, people began to find their level in this matter.

57. Can you give us an idea when it was started?—In that district it started when the Waimate Plains were opened for sale. I could not give you the exact date.

58. Had that considerable influence on leaseholds: I mean leaseholds offered by the Public Trustee?—Yes.

59. When did you take a lease?—In 1883. I took possession on the 1st of July.

60. Do you know the date on which the confirmed lease was granted upon which you arbitrated?—No; not at present. I should say again that I am quite unprepared for cross-examination in this matter. I brought down nothing with me. I have been only staying a day or two in Wellington, and by accident I am here.

61. You have stated that the rents of the confirmed leases round about Hawera were too high?—I have no doubt about that, because they were granted at the time of the land-fever.

62. Did that land-fever extend as far back as 1877?—The times were considerably better in 1877, and the three years following, than in 1887.

63. Can you say whether the land-fever was in existence in 1877 and 1878?—People put a higher value on that land then than they have since.

64. Much higher?—Much higher.

65. Was the frozen mutton export started?—That was in 1882.

66. That could not affect the price offered for leases in 1877 and 1878?—No.

67. Mr. Wilson informs me that the date of this lease is December, 1878, so that the frozen