29. Have you formed any opinion as to which site would be the most suitable for the Parliamentary Buildings, the old Parliamentary Buildings site or the Government House site?—In my opinion there is no comparison. The old Parliamentary Buildings site is a very inconvenient site indeed. The Government House site is superior in every respect—it is larger, it is much more square in form, and it is fairly level. The old Parliamentary Buildings site is long and narrow, and the two streets that bound it and give it its principal frontage are at an extreme difference in level. I suppose, without actually measuring it, there must be a difference in level of nearly 60 ft. between Sydney Street and Hill Street, which makes it extremely difficult to utilise the site to its fullest extent. You must waste a large part of your ground in a big batter to these streets, or else erect tremendous retaining-walls and basements, which would provide less useful accommodation and make the structure very costly.

30. Then, in your opinion, the Government House site which we are now on is much the better of the two?—Very much better. It is bounded by four streets, and a building here could be better lit, better displayed, and better served in every way, and the area is larger.

31. Have you considered the question from the Government standpoint or the Dominion standpoint of the suggestion of the Wellington City Corporation in regard to having a portion of Charlotte Street devoted to them for traffic?—I hardly know how to view it from the Dominion's standpoint, but from the citizens' point of view the widening is a very desirable thing indeed.

32. Do you know what width the City Corporation has asked for?—I do not know, but I presume they require to make the street at least 66 ft. wide. Very few of the older streets in Wellington are 66 ft. wide, but the Corporation is endeavouring to widen them when possible.

33. But the strip of land would be very valuable from a monetary point of view so far as the Corporation is concerned?—Yes.

34. And do you think the closing of Sydney Street could be considered a *quid pro quo*?—I am not in favour of the closing of Sydney Street. I think it would be distinctly disadvantageous to close Sydney Street, both from their point of view and also from ours.

35. In the event of the Wellington City Corporation requiring that strip of land in Charlotte Street, which apparently they think they ought to get for nothing, you consider it is a pretty valuable piece of land to hand over?—Yes, and, furthermore, if the Parliamentary Building site is changed to the Government House site, I understand it is proposed to widen both Sydney Street and Bowen Street, and also Museum Street.

36. *Hon. Mr. Guinness.*] Is not the Government Insurance Building also occupied by a number of private tenants?—I mentioned that the Government Insurance is an outside trading Department, and they spend money on buildings simply for the purpose of investing in property. They do it not only in Wellington, but also in Dunedin and elsewhere.

37. Are you of opinion that all Government Departments and offices—that is to say, those which are not considered outside trading concerns—should be located in one large building or several buildings?—I think it would be better to locate them in detached buildings, but there are some Departments of the Government service which are very closely allied, and no doubt it would be advisable to group them.

38. You have told us that in your opinion there is no comparison between this site and the old site for the erection of the Parliamentary Buildings?—That is so.

39. Well, do you think the old Parliamentary Buildings site is a suitable site on which to erect new Government offices?—It is not unsuitable, but it is not as good as the present Departmental Buildings site.

40. Do you think there is sufficient land on which Government Departmental Buildings could be erected on the old Parliamentary Buildings site?—Yes, I think there is ample land.

41. *Mr. R. Mackenzie.*] Is it a fact that important State documents are kept in the Departmental wooden buildings because of insufficient strong-room accommodation?—Yes, to a large extent that is so.

42. Is there any reason why a new fireproof brick building should not be erected on the land along the frontages of the Departmental Buildings?—None whatever. I have already said, in reply to the Prime Minister, that I think the present Departmental site is the superior site for Departmental buildings.

43. But I mean, could additions be erected without interfering with the present building at all?—You could erect on the Featherston Street side a considerable building without interfering with the present building at all.

44. But there is considerable space on the other side?—The present building seems to stand 85 ft. from Whitmore Street, the same distance back from Lambton Quay, the same from Bunny Street, and from 80 ft. to 150 ft. back from Featherston Street.

45. Do you think it would be practicable to start a fireproof building on Featherston Street and work up to Lambton Quay?—I do.

46. In regard to the suggested proposal of putting the Departmental Buildings on the old Parliamentary Buildings site, I think you said you do not favour the closing of Sydney Street?—Yes, I do not think it would be advisable to close Sydney Street.

47. Without closing it, do you think there is sufficient area there to erect Departmental Buildings for the Government, say, for requirements for the next fifty years?—Yes, I think there is ample.

48. What is the area?—There is an area of nearly 5 acres. To be exact, it is 4 acres 3 roods 18 perches.

49. Do you think it would be a disadvantage to have the Departmental Buildings on that site?—I think it is a very good site, but I do not think it is equal to the present Government Buildings site.