

facing it was not consented to by the District Land Registrar. But in the case of the little right-of-ways there is no dedication. They are private right-of-ways, and agreed to by the Trust providing the town consents to them, and the town has consented in all cases.

30. *Mr. Herries.*] Then you have £2,500 in hand according to the report?—Yes.

31. What is the capital value of the land?—£110,000. That is the Government valuation of the Greymouth Reserve, but the value is really more than that. In regard to that amount in hand, a lot of that is capital; some of it is compensation for land taken under the Public Works Act, and in that case it falls into the fund and is treated as capital.

32. That is not accumulation of rents?—No.

33. Do you think it would be better for the Maoris if the Government were to give them £110,000 for the Reserve?—They would get an increased amount.

34. And if it was invested for their benefit by your office?—They would get an increase of 40 per cent. on their income, but would have no further increase. Of course, if the place was swept away they would have a decrease.

35. What percentage do they get on their capital value at the present moment?—£3 15s. per cent.

36. And what is the average on investments when you invest for them?—We can reckon on getting 4 per cent. net.

37. Do they get that now?—No, that is on part of the Reserve. The value of the part leased is £95,000, and it comes to £3 15s. per cent. gross.

38. Then it would be better for the Maoris if the Government paid them the value of the land and invested the amount for them?—Yes, they would get an increase, and they are not certain of that now.

39. What percentage do you charge them?—Seven and a half per cent.

40. Is not that rather a large sum to charge them?—Yes, it is a large sum, but it does not pay the office. The Native business is the least payable part of the business of the office. All Native reserves are administered by one branch.

41. You charge $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. over all?—Yes.

42. What other charges are there besides?—Land-tax.

43. Do they pay the whole of that?—Yes, on the whole reserve. Each Maori if he only gets £2 a year pays land-tax. The office pays land-tax on the whole block.

44. Could you show a statement of what land-tax has been paid?—I could get it for you.

45. Do you pay a graduated tax?—No, the Native reserves are exempt from that.

46. You only pay the ordinary land-tax?—Yes, ordinary land-tax.

47. That is an old grievance, and you have recommended in the case of the West Coast Native lands that an alteration in the Land and Income Assessment Act should be made in order to exempt Native lands?—Yes, I have frequently recommended that.

48. Not to exempt them, but to make the exemptions apply?—Yes.

49. *Hon. Mr. Guinness.*] In regard to the question put by Mr. Herries, you say that the rentals bring in £3 15s. per cent. Is that on the gross income or upon the net income?—The gross income of the land leased is £3 15s. per cent.

50. What is the income on the capital value of the Reserve that the Natives actually receive—have you worked that out?—Yes, they get about £3,083 19s. 8d. net.

51. And the capital unimproved value of the Reserve is £110,000?—Yes.

52. That is on what is leased?—Yes, it is not all leased. On the whole it comes to a great deal less than £3 15s. per cent.

53. There are other charges besides the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. that you levy on the Natives—legal charges?—No, we get at the tenants for that. The tenants get a cheap lease, and we charge them £1 for the lease.

54. I mean, other charges in connection with the management of the Reserve: you make no legal charges on the owners?—No, the commission of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. covers everything. I might say I thought it was too high some time ago, and I got a report from the accountant.

55. You recollect that up to quite recently, with every transaction, assignment, mortgage, or transfer, the Public Trustee charged 10s. for writing his signature to the word "Consent"?—Yes, a private lender's solicitor usually charges £1 1s.; but we have reduced it to 5s. now. You spoke to me about it.

56. Yes, and you agreed to reduce it to 5s. for the tenants?—Yes. Of course, the Natives do not pay that.

57. Now, with regard to the evidence about the dedication of side streets, we will first take Threadneedle Street. That is a street less than 66 ft. wide, and it was put through some large blocks that were leased to a tenant named McDavit?—I did not know that. It was before my time.

58. Do you not know that since that street was made those large blocks have been cut up into small sections and leased by the Public Trust Office to tenants? The effect of that is that the total rent received for those large blocks has more than increased fourfold, and therefore the putting of that small street through the blocks has increased the rental of the lands adjoining by fourfold and upwards?—I could not say. I could look up the records before and since.

59. Can you not get the records to prove my statement?—I think so. How long back?

60. I think it was between 1896 and 1871?—I think we could get the records.

61. Do you not know that the process of dividing large areas into small blocks, and making a right-of-way or small street which the Borough Council approves of, has the effect ultimately of increasing the rent to the Natives by increasing the rent of the blocks so cut up?—It has not increased them so far.

62. But that is the natural effect when the leases fall in?—But they have fallen in. A great number of them have fallen in during the last twenty-one years.