

79. Would that in any way account for the rise in the value of land from 1903 to 1906?—Yes, undoubtedly. There has been a rise in the value of dairying land right through up to the present day.

80. You do not know what the land-tax value for this land was in 1906?—It is here: it was given as a little under £7

*Mr Myers* I propose to call the Valuer-General to prove that.

81. *Mr Fraser.*] You do not know it?—No.

82. Then, the general rise in the price of dairy-produce might easily account for the rise of some pounds per acre in the value of rural land?—Easily—it has done.

83. In those three years?—Yes.

84. *Mr Reed.*] As what did Mr Major write in those communications, as a land agent or as a member of Parliament?—I think, as a land agent.

*Mr Skerrett:* If Mr Fraser would look at the letters he would find they are written on ordinary business forms in the ordinary business way

85. *The Chairman.*] So far as your knowledge goes from the documents that have come under your notice, was Mr Major directly or indirectly concerned in the sale to the Government of the property of Alfred Bayly at Toko?—By this file he does not appear to have been. There is nothing on the documents to show that Mr Major was communicated with at all. The communications were sent to Mr A. Bayly himself. The offer was sent to Mr A. Bayly, and the sale appears to have been made through him direct.

86. But apart from the documents?—I do not know

87. *Mr Allen.*] What about the letter of the 16th April, 1904?—

*The Chairman:* That is Frederick Bayly.

*Mr Allen:* No, it is not.

*Mr Major* I could clear that up in a moment if you would permit me.

*The Chairman:* Let the witness give his answer as far as he can.

*Witness* There is a letter from the Premier here to Mr Barron saying that he had been offered the property through Mr Major, but after that there does not appear to have been any communications from Mr Major

88. *The Chairman.*] Read the letter?—The letter states, “I have received a letter from Mr C. E. Major, M.H.R., of Hawera, in reference to Mr. A. Bayly’s property at Toko, and suggesting that it would not be out of place to have the property inspected with a possible view of its acquisition by the Government. I have replied to Mr Major that I would mention the matter to you.—R. J. SEDDON”

89. *Mr Myers*] I have a recollection that I asked you before—but I may be wrong—whether Mr Major’s letter was on the file?—No, it is not.

90. *Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward.*] In the report from Mr. Barron, the Crown Lands Ranger, that you read, Mr Ritchie, he said the unimproved value of the land was £7 11s. 8d. per acre?—Yes.

91. And that the improvements were £6,393?—Yes.

92. Making the value of the land £11 per acre?—That is his figure.

93. *Mr Myers*] There is one point we did not get, and that is the date of the completion of Alfred Bayly’s purchase—or the date of his acceptance will do?—The 24th August, 1906.

94. That is the date of the completion?—The date of the telegram from Mr Bayly

95. And when was the transaction completed—soon after?—You mean the payment?

96. Yes, or the execution of the documents?—The 4th October is the date of the office stamp when the voucher was approved.

At this stage, Mr Chairman, I want to put in a volume of *Hansard*, No. 135, page 579, 9th October, 1905, containing a speech by Mr Walter Symes. I will read the portion of it which I wish particularly to refer to, and if Mr Skerrett desires he can refer to any further portion. Mr Symes has been speaking of Crown lands, and he goes on to say, “I know next to nothing about the Land for Settlements Act. There is only one estate in my district that has been acquired under the Land for Settlements Act. That estate was not wisely acquired, and whether it was the Government or the Board who were to blame I am not sure; but, whichever it was, they gave £2 10s. per acre more for that land than I could have bought it for. And the strange thing is that when they bought that land the owner of it was cutting it up, whilst lands that had been offered to them that were not being cut up they would not look at. I am not quite certain whether it is the head of the Department who is at fault, but the Government seem to be quite powerless or quite indifferent about the whole matter so far as my district is concerned. I am satisfied that if they had asked my opinion in regard to the estate they acquired I should at once have advised them not to buy it at the price they gave for it.”

97. *Mr Buchanan.*] That is Mr Bayly’s land?—No, Mr Frederick Bayly’s. Mr Alfred Bayly’s land was acquired less than a year after that speech.

FREDERICK WILLIAM FLANAGAN sworn and examined. (No. 12)

1. *Mr Myers.*] You are the Valuer-General?—Yes.

2. You were asked to produce copies of entries from the valuation roll in regard to two properties—namely, the property purchased by the Government from Frederick Bayly, and the property purchased by the Government from Alfred Bayly?—Yes.

3. You have the necessary copies here?—Yes.

4. Take the first place, Frederick Bayly’s property?—The Frederick Bayly property consisted of 944 acres. It is entered on the valuation roll of 1897 as follows: “Unimproved value, £1,900; capital value, £4,555.”