

60. How many properties, upon your representations to the Government or to the Land Purchase Board, were purchased?—Two—Mr Livingston's before I became a member of Parliament, and Mr Fred. Bayly's after I became a member of Parliament.

61 In connection with this particular property—No. 1 charge—which is the only one, I understand from you, as a member of Parliament you offered to the Government, did you receive any payment of any sort or kind from the Government?—No.

62. Or from any Government officer?—No.

63. Did you make any payment of any kind out of your commissions, or not out of commissions, to any one connected with the Board or any Government Department?—No, it never occurred to my mind.

64. Did you at any time inform any member of the Land Purchase Board, or any member of the Government, or any Government officer, that you were putting this property under offer upon the condition that you were to receive a commission from the seller of the land?—No. I did not even say that to Mr. Barron, and I was dealing with him direct the whole time, and nobody else.

65. Did you attempt to bring any pressure to bear upon the Land Purchase Board or the Government in connection with Fred. Bayly's property at Toko?—No. I should like those people who think those things to try it, and see for themselves.

66. *Hon. Mr Millar*] You said, Mr Major, that your business all the time has been that of a land-broker?—Yes.

67 It was entirely in that position you put those letters before the Land Purchase Board?—Yes. I think you will find that most of those letters were written and signed by a clerk of mine, because he conducted the business, as most of the time I was not there.

68. *Mr Massey*] Was there any objection by Mr Bayly to pay the ordinary commission for the sale to the Government?—He paid something less than what had been arranged, if my memory serves me right, because he had to accept less than was originally asked for his property.

69 The arrangement was that you were to receive—what?—Two and a half per cent.

70. What was the total amount?—I could not remember I was supposed to receive 2½ per cent. on the sale.

71 Did you?—I received a net sum of £300.

72 *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Do you recollect the total amount of the purchase of this particular estate?—No, I do not.

73. *The Chairman.*] Did you consider it inconsistent with your position as a member of the House to offer this property for sale to the Government?—Not in any sense. Look at it from this standpoint: I have been living in Auckland recently, and I do not suppose anybody would assail the integrity of Mr John Bollard, and he has sold three properties to the Government—

*Members* No, no. That should not be said.

*The Chairman* It is irrelevant: we are not dealing with a charge against Mr Bollard.

*Witness* It seems to me, Mr Chairman, that it is perhaps a question of ethics in the minds of some people, and I wanted to indicate to the Committee that as far as I was concerned I thought it was a legitimate and proper transaction, for which I should be commended, rather than that my action should be looked upon as reprehensible. The more the matter is looked into, the better it will be for the Government and the better for myself. It will stand the most rigid scrutiny that any parliamentary Committee or any Court of law could apply.

74. What do you base that on?—On the facts. I sold the property through Mr Barron to the Government, and the land was sold at less than its value.

75. *Mr. Myers.*] Can you say whether the property was in the hands of any other private person as well as yours?—I do not know It may have been, but I have no knowledge of it having been so.

76. *The Chairman.*] Was the commission you received a reasonable commission as compared with what other agents receive for selling similar properties?—Yes, but on the low side. I should like it to have been more.

77 *Mr Allen.*] Mr Major raised the question of ethics; and may I ask the question, if there were two land agents, one a member of Parliament and the other not, which would be the most likely to get the business in a dealing of this kind?—So far as my experience goes, most certainly the one who did not happen to be a member of Parliament. Of that I am quite sure. My experience is that the fact of being a member of Parliament is almost a certain bar to obtaining any concessions from the Government or from any departmental offices.

78. In respect to what?—In respect to almost any transaction that savours of business.

79 That is your view, but I do not suppose you can say what the public idea is?—Yes, the public are ever suspicious. They are like certain members of Parliament some of them cannot conceive honesty in themselves, and therefore they cannot conceive honesty in others.

*Mr Massey* Is that right, Mr Chairman?

*The Chairman* No, it is irrelevant.

*Mr. Massey* Should not the witness be ordered to withdraw the statement?

*The Chairman* Yes.

*Witness* I am here at the instance of a member of Parliament, and I think Mr Hine should have made proper inquiries as to whether there was any wrongdoing before bringing me here. I have had a cab waiting here this morning to enable me to catch the train, and I have now had to send it away I have been here for a whole week, and I ask, what for?

80. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] In regard to charge No. 2: That letter you stated you wrote on behalf of Mr Arndt—when you wrote that letter you wrote it as a member of Parliament. Were you then of opinion that the land you were recommending the late Prime Minister to entertain the purchase of was value for the amount Mr Arndt was recommending it at?—If