

13. Do you remember whether it was you or Mr Major who suggested approaching the Government with a view to it purchasing the property?—As far as my memory serves me, I think I did myself

14. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Were you trustee in the estate with your brother who died?—No.

15. Did you pay any one anything outside the amount you paid Mr Major for commission?—Not a penny

16. Had you any direct representations with any of the members of the then Government?—No.

17. Had you any direct representations with the then members of the Land Purchase Board?—No.

18. *Mr Massey*] Was Mr Major a member of Parliament at the time you suggested to him that probably the Government would purchase the property?—I think so.

19. And had that anything to do with your suggestion?—I do not know. I thought the Government were buying, and Mr Major wanted to know if I would sell the property in pieces. I said No, that unless he could sell it altogether I would sell it myself

20. *The Chairman.*] Did you place this property in the hands of Mr Major as a land agent?—As a land agent, yes.

21. At the time you placed it in his hands did you recognize or consider that you had to pay him for services rendered?—I did, certainly

22. Then you employed him as a land agent to offer your property for sale as a land agent to the Government?—Yes, to any one he liked to sell it to.

23. You paid him a commission?—Yes.

24. Was the fact of him being a member of Parliament an inducement to you did it weigh with you in placing the property in his hands?—No, I do not think I thought about it.

25. *Mr Myers*] How far is Hawera from Stratford?—About eighteen miles, I think.

26. Is Stratford as large a place as Hawera?—I should say somewhere about the same, as far as I can say

27. How far was your property at Toko from Stratford?—About ten miles and a half

28. In which direction—towards Hawera or the other way?—The other way

29. Were there any land agents in Stratford at that time?—I think so.

30. Including Mr Newton King?—Yes, Mr King would be there.

31. *Mr Buchanan.*] Had you previously employed Mr Major as a land agent?—I had general transactions with Mr Major some years ago, when I was at Manaia. I do not remember whether I gave him my place at Manaia to sell, but I believe it was in his hands. That would be twenty years ago.

32. Had you been employing any other land agent in the course of your business previous to putting the Toko property into Mr Major's hands?—I had done business with Mr King in stock and that sort of thing.

33. In land?—I do not think so. I do not remember to have done so.

34. *Right Hon. Sir J G Ward.*] Mr Bayly, the property you sold to the Government at £12 10s. an acre—do you know it now?—Yes.

35. Is it worth less or more than the price you sold it at?—More. It is worth considerably more.

36. Do you know how much it is worth?—About £15 or £16 an acre. In some cases probably £20.

37. *The Chairman.*] Did the Government receive the property at a price less than that for which other people would have got it if offered to them?—I only put the one price on it that I know of, and Mr Major was the only man who had it—from memory

38. Did you get that price for it?—Yes.

39. There were no specific instructions to sell to any particular person or body?—No.

40. *Mr Massey*] You got the price you wanted?—Yes.

41. Got it in cash?—Yes; the Government are good payers.

42. You were not asked to take debentures?—No.

Amongst the correspondence read by the Clerk was the following telegram:—

“Unjust of Committee to allow suspicion to remain that I was party to Symes's letter being put to improper use. I am in no way guilty of breach of confidence, and enter protest that it may be placed on record. “W C WHITLOCK.”

WALTER SYMES made a declaration and was examined. (No. 16.)

1. *Mr Skerrett.*] What is your name?—Walter Symes.

2. Where do you reside?—Between Otorohanga and Pirongia, in the King-country

3. For some years you resided in Stratford, I think?—Yes.

4. Will you give me the years during which you resided there?—About fourteen years.

5. Until what year?—Last year, 1909

6. During that period what business did you carry on in Stratford?—For the last twelve years a land, insurance, and general agency business.

7. You had an office, as is usual?—Yes.

8. And held yourself out to do that class of business?—Yes.

9. During what years were you a member of Parliament?—Until the election of 1908—twelve years previously to that—from 1896, I think, to 1908

10. Were you one of the original lessees of the west coast reserves?—Yes, I was one of the very first lessees of the west coast reserves, in 1874.