

102. It is shown on the plan as going through?—I do not know whether it has been taken yet.
103. Do you know what the owner has got in the way of compensation?—No.
104. Has the road been taken through without his permission?—It is laid off under the Public Works Act; we could not take it by agreement.
105. What did you offer them in the way of compensation for the land?—We asked for the small piece of 200 acres cut off, but the owner said he would not sell it except at a prohibitive price, mentioning no figure at all.
106. Then, can you tell what the land cost under the Public Works Act?—I do not think it has been taken yet.
107. Is this land on both sides—*i.e.*, Runanga 1A and Pohokura—of the same character?—No.
108. Which is the better land?—The Crown land, Pohokura.
109. Better than Runanga No. 1A?—Yes.
110. In what way: is it pumice land?—It is all bush, and the Runanga No. 1A is composed of very little bush—mostly pumice country.
111. And is Pohokura all bush?—Yes.
112. In estimating the value of this land at £2 10s. per acre did you allow for severance?—No, because I considered it was a good bargain even without severance. It is a very hard thing to estimate.
113. Were you making the owner of Runanga No. 1A an increased payment because you were severing from him some land that was of value to his block—were you making allowance to Ballan as the owner of the land?—In what way?
114. Well, did you think the rest of his property would be injured by your cutting off that land, or was it purely the value of the land, or was it on account of severance?—Purely the value of the land.
115. Then, as a matter of business, do you not think it would have been a better bargain for the State if you had taken this road under the Public Works Act?—I think it would have been a very much worse bargain.
116. Why?—Well, it would so much have reduced the value of the Crown lands adjoining. We could not have taken what lay between the road and our own boundary under the Act.
117. There is no provision under the Act to take that piece?—No.
118. It would have had to be by private treaty?—Yes.
119. On the 13th February, 1911, you considered 15s. was the fair value for this land?—No. The Chief Surveyor was asking for authority to offer 15s.
120. Did you not approve of 15s. as a reasonable price for the land on the 13th February, 1911?—Yes.
121. And on the 17th June, 1911, did you consider that £2 10s. was a reasonable price?—Yes.
122. And what had happened between the 13th February and 17th June to increase the value of the land to that extent?—At 15s. we would have been getting the land for less, that was all.
123. We have got to find out why this land has increased in value as between February and June from 15s. to £2 10s., and I want to know from you as a man on the spot what caused the value of the land to bump up from 15s. to £2 10s. in that time—what was the reason for it?—15s. was the price we wanted it for, but £2 10s. was the price we got it from them. If we could have got it for 15s. it would have been all the better for the Department.
124. And do you think it right to offer much under the proper value in order to make a good bargain for the State?—Yes, I think so. At 15s. we were paying more than the producing-value of the land. It was only on account of its position that it was worth £2 10s.
125. But you allowed for that. The whole block was valued at 5s. in 1907, and then on the 13th February, 1911, you valued it at 15s., allowing evidently for the increase in value, and then within a few months afterwards you recommend that £2 10s. should be paid?—That was the offer.
126. And you recommended it should be paid?—Yes.
127. And there is no explanation why this increased value accrued except that you thought you could not get it at 15s.?—I knew that we could not get it at 15s.
128. You had no communication with any one except the Chief Surveyor in this connection, had you?—No. I saw Mr. Ballan once on the ground.
129. What date was that?—Some time in April, 1910; but there was nothing said about taking the land then.
130. Was that the time you were thinking of taking it under the Public Works Act?—That was the first time.
131. That was the time you were thinking of taking it under the Public Works Act—29th March?—Yes.
132. Do you know what this Runanga was valued at?—The Government valuation in 1907 was 5s.
133. But now, in 1912, have you any idea what it is valued at?—No.
134. But you know the land opposite, Pohokura No. 2, is 14s.?—That is my own valuation.
135. I am trying to find out what the value of the land is in that district?—There is no comparison between the two: Pohokura is much better.
136. If you had taken this road under the Public Works Act without this piece of land available, would this land have been still worth 14s. without access on to that road?—No, it would not have been.
137. Why?—On account of the difficulty of working the sections, the yarding, and accommodation.
138. It is flat country?—About half is flat and the other half is easy country. From the boundary it rises up on to the Opureke Range.