

58. If you had been arranging this affair, would you have taken the 1,404 acres or taken the road under the Public Works Act?—Apart from the Pohokura Block?

59. You must take it as it is situated?—I would have endeavoured to take the piece marked purple with the object of getting the homestead-sites, but not under the Public Works Act.

60. *Mr. Witty.*] Have you any idea of the length of the fence that was on the Runanga Block at the time?—About ten miles; it might have been more.

61. Have you any idea of the value of that?—No. Mr. Walshe could probably tell you.

62. *Mr. Coates.*] Looking at the plan, the country on the left of the road that has been taken appears to be very steep?—In part, I should say, very. I should say that somewhere near the letter "W" at the Waipunga Stream, right up to where the red road crosses the stream, it is fairly steep on the left hand going up. After that it is not quite so steep, and after that on the left-hand side it is not steep at all.

63. *Mr. Statham.*] There is a letter from Mr. Walshe to the Chief Surveyor, Napier, in which he says, "The value, including $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles of fencing, is £516"?—He will be able to tell you what that means, but I am under the impression that all is fenced, and that would be nearly ten miles.

64. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.*] Would that fencing be of any advantage to the prospective settlers on this Pohokura Block?—Yes; he could fence up against it and make it one side of his paddocks.

65. And would therefore be considered as part of the purchase-money?—Yes, I take it it was considered part of the purchase price. I know nothing as to the state of the fence or of its value.

66. *The Chairman.*] The road is fenced on the left-hand side?—Yes, it is now being fenced.

67. If a settler made his paddocks he would have to fence along the other side of the road?—Yes.

HARRY EDWIN WALSH further examined. (No. 3.)

1. *Mr. Witty.*] Can you inform the Committee of the length of the fencing that is taken in by this purchase?—416 chains—about five miles and a quarter.

2. What was the fencing-material used in the fence?—Matai, I suppose.

3. Post and rails?—Post and wires. A seven-wire fence.

4. What was the value of that fence?—10s. per chain.

5. And what distance were the posts apart?—About four or five to the chain, and three battens of kahikatea.

6. *Mr. Coates.*] How old was the fence?—It was erected in 1909 or 1910.

7. *Mr. Witty.*] About three years old—it would be practically a new fence?—Yes.

8. Do you think a fence similar to it could be put up for 10s. a chain?—No.

9. What amount would be allowed for deterioration in three years?—About half a crown per chain.

10. Is the fence of any use to the Government settlers when they get on the land?—Yes.

11. *Mr. Coates.*] What do you reckon a similar new fence would cost to erect now?—About £60 a mile—15s. a chain.

12. *The Chairman.*] Do you reckon the cost of fencing has gone up during the last three years?—No, I do not think so.

13. *Mr. Coates.*] How do you account for the difference of half a crown per chain? You say the value is 10s. per chain, and a new fence would cost 15s. per chain, and you have only allowed half a crown?—It is only worth, I think, 10s. to the Crown. It is not the value of a new fence, because a settler may have to shift it in places.

14. That is the other half a crown?—Yes.

JOHN STRAUCHON further examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand you desire to say something further to the Committee?—Yes. I was asked a question about the length of the fence, and my attention has been drawn since I sat down to the fact that the fence goes away from our part of the property at the corner—at the top of No. 3—Native land. That accounts for the difference in the length which I gave when I said it was ten miles long.

RICHARD KEENE examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A settler, residing in Wellington.

2. Do you know the Runanga No. 1A Block?—Well, I know something of it. I have never been on the block myself.

3. Would you state your connection with the block?—Well, in conjunction with Mr. Reid, some years ago we purchased this block. As a matter of fact, we took it in exchange for some Wellington properties.

4. What was the date of that?—I should say, roughly, about five years ago.

5. Do you still hold the block?—No, we sold it.

6. When did you sell it?—I suppose, about a couple of years ago. I sold my interest to Mr. Reid, and Mr. Reid sold it to a man named Thomas Ballan, of Christchurch.

7. Can you give the date of that sale?—Not from memory.

8. Had negotiations been entered into by the Government regarding these 1,404 acres?—No, not when I was in it.

9. You have never been over the land?—No, I have not.

10. *Mr. Witty.*] Roughly speaking, can you give us the approximate date when it was sold to Mr. Ballan?—I could not really say. I should imagine, about two years ago or a little more.

11. Have you any interest in the land now?—I hold a mortgage over it from Ballan to myself.