

96. *Mr. Guthrie.*] In regard to this strip marked purple on the map of 1,400 acres, supposing the road had been taken through under the Public Works Act in exactly the line where it is placed at the present time and cut off that piece, what would have been the effect on that piece if cut off from the rest of the property?—I do not know. I think Mr. Keene would get compensation for the land taken. I do not think there would be any loss really. I think it would enhance the value of the land.

97. Mr. Keene, then, having an interest in that property, what would be his likely action in dealing with that piece of land if the road was going through: would he try to get the road on it or try to retain it?—No, he would hang on to it, I should say.

98. Even though it was severed by the road going up?—No, that would not matter a little bit. The property is already severed by this other road. It only benefits half, because you do not get a fence alongside the road—it saves the fences.

99. *Mr. Witty.*] By the putting of that road through—by the severance—would it not mean that whoever was the owner of that property would have to put up an extra fence?—I do not think so. Why?

100. Where would the people keep their stock?—If there was a road put down there without a fence on the other side, they would surely have a gate at the end. The cattle would simply run over the road from one side to the other.

101. It would not be a proper road. You know the Pohokura Block: was it suitable for cutting up for close settlement as it stood without the acquisition of that flat?—I do not see how you could have cut it up without that: it is all a high hill. I have not been over it.

102. Therefore the acquisition of that 1,400 acres has put an increased value on the Government property?—I should say so.

103. And allowed them to cut up the land in smaller areas?—Yes.

104. Were there any places that you know of where the houses could be built or yards made on the Government land?—They could not have been erected without clearings had been made.

105. But is there sufficient flat land for homesteads?—With this piece now there is.

106. But without it?—I could not say that. I know it is all very high hill and very thick bush.

107. Would it have been possible to have put a road in at a reasonable cost without the acquisition of this property?—I do not think so.

108. *Mr. Statham.*] You think, Mr. Beere, that the acquisition of that land enabled the Government to cut this land up into smaller areas, but the plan shows two access-roads, one of 36 chains and the other of 45 chains. I will now read you a letter written by the Chief Surveyor at Napier to the Under-Secretary on the 20th March, 1911, when it was suggested that the sections should be made larger and they should not acquire the land between the road and the Government land. He says, "To enlarge the sections to 7,000 acres as suggested will only save one access-road, and as they are only short ones, the expense will not be great, and I would respectfully suggest that the original scheme of subdivision be adhered to." Do you not admit that it was possible to cut up the land into the same areas in spite of the fact that they were not going to get the land between the road and the Crown land?—They could cut it up any way, but I think it is a question of cutting it up with that land.

109. In reply to Mr. Witty you said you agreed with him that if they did not acquire the land between they would have to get bigger sections?—The Chief Surveyor bears that out.

110. He says, "But even so it will be a better and cheaper road than any other we can get elsewhere. To enlarge the sections to 7,000 acres as suggested will only save one access-road." I do not deny that it might be some benefit to the Government to get the land between?—You could cut up the land any way you liked, but the question is whether they make useful runs.

111. But the point I want to get at is this: you can still retain the subdivisions and have complete access to them?—It is not a question of access.

112. Yes, it is?—You can cut into a block of land that you cannot build a house on.

113. Then the land could have been cut up into the same areas?—Yes.

114. But not to the same advantage?—No.

115. *Mr. Nosworthy.*] You will notice on the plan where the Waipunga Stream lies that running parallel with that there is land marked green. Looking at the map I take it that between the stream and the green land is flat country?—It is rising.

116. But low country?—Yes.

117. Country that you could build a homestead on?—Yes.

118. And it is evident, before the Government acquired this block from the Runanga Estate, they left the piece between the stream and the land marked green?—The part coloured green remains in the Runanga Run.

119. But between the green tracing which runs parallel to the river and the section marks of the different blocks there is a piece of flat attached to each property?—That is right.

120. Therefore there was ground enough for each property, previous to the Government acquiring Runanga, which is attached to each section in front?—It looks like it on the plan. As far as my recollection goes the fence actually cuts into the bush in many places.

121. *Mr. R. W. Smith.*] If this sale had not taken place, I take it that the people coming in and taking up Government sections would have had to halve the maintenance of the fence with the owner of the Runanga Estate?—That is correct, yes.

122. And, in addition to that, would have had to pay the owner of the Runanga Estate half the value of the fence?—No, you cannot call upon the Crown to pay half the cost of a fence.

123. But directly it is taken up by a selector?—I do not think he is called upon to pay half, but he has to pay half the maintenance thereafter.

124. And not half the cost of the fence?—No, I do not think so.