

2. Well, could you give us a rough idea of how much more fencing the owner of Runanga will have to maintain now as compared with what he would have had to maintain if this land had not been sold?—He has still got as much fencing to maintain, only he has half share of the tenants. He has still ten miles.

3. I wish to know how much more he will have to maintain?—About a couple of miles. If there had been no sale he would have had to maintain the whole of that portion next to the Crown tenants' section.

4. And you are thinking of selling that portion?—Yes. Apparently I was wrong in my statement in regard to the tenants' piece. Therefore the owner of Runanga has still the one piece to maintain, which is ten miles.

5. How much more fencing will the owner of Runanga have to maintain now than he would have had to do if no sale had taken place?—I do not think it will vary—practically no difference.

6. *Mr. Statham.*] There is about ten miles of fencing along the road-line now which the owner of the Runanga Estate will have to maintain?—It is not yet erected, but he will have to maintain it.

7. If that road had not been taken under the Public Works Act would not the position have been exactly the same?—Yes, because we would have had the fences on both sides.

8. In other words, is the owner of Runanga at any disadvantage through the purchase having been made?—Not so far as fencing is concerned. We have to erect the fence and he has to maintain it. He would have had to maintain all the fence if we had not bought.

9. Really the purchase from the owner by the Crown of the portion coloured purple means that he has less fencing to maintain than he had before?—I do not know whether it is less. He has parted with portion of it.

10. Yes, and that is so-much less?—Yes.

11. Do you consider that the fact that this land is being cut up and will be settled by settlers will have any effect upon the Runanga Estate?—Yes, of course, it will; it will induce population, and that will benefit the district.

12. So that the Runanga Estate will be benefited by the cutting-up?—If it is settled.

13. *Mr. Nosworthy.*] The point I wanted to get at was this: assuming that this flat land had not been purchased by the Government or any one else, and the Government had come in and said, "We are going to take what is this proposed line of road under the Public Works Act for the purposes of a road," that road then would have gone through the Runanga Estate, and the Runanga Estate would have been on each side of the road. Then if the settlers had asked for the road to be fenced, he would have had to fence ten miles on each side, which would be twenty miles?—No, you are wrong. If we had taken it under the Public Works Act we should have had to fence on both sides. The maintenance would then have remained with him. We would have put up the fence, and he would have had to keep it.

14. *Mr. R. W. Smith.*] In buying this piece of land instead of taking it under the Public Works Act there will be very much less fencing for the owner to pay for than if the Crown had taken it under the Public Works Act?—I do not see any difference.

15. I take it you said just now that the Crown will have to fence both sides of the road?—They will have to do it now, so the tenants when they come in will have to pay half.

16. *Mr. Statham.*] If that strip had still remained vested in the owner of the land he would have had to maintain twenty miles instead of ten?—Yes, if it had still remained with him.

17. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.*] Would you kindly state to the Committee whether, in your opinion, the balance of the Runanga Block benefits or otherwise by the severance of this 1,400 acres, including the responsibility for fencing or any other cost that might be incurred in the transaction?—Well, if the estate had been mine I would rather not have had the road there. I would rather have taken in the flats.

18. Therefore you are of opinion that the balance of the estate does not benefit by the transaction in question?—Only if they were going to subdivide. If the road was made they would have that advantage.

19. You have been on the ground?—Yes, I merely rode up the track and back again.

20. *Mr. T. W. Rhodes.*] If the land was simply used as a run there would be no necessity to fence along the road?—No. The only question is this: that you cannot compel a man to shut the gate, and therefore you are unfenced. You may shut the gate when you go through, but you never know what the next man will do.

21. But there would be no absolute obligation for him to fence?—No, he could run the risk of loss of stock.

WEDNESDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 1912.

GEORGE WARREN RUSSELL attended and made a statement. (No. 9.)

*The Chairman:* I have intimated to the Committee, Mr. Russell, that you desire to make a statement, and the Committee will be very glad to hear anything you have to say. Further, the Committee have decided that if you desire it a copy of the evidence will be handed to you, and you will be permitted to cross-examine any of the witnesses who have given evidence before the Committee.

*Mr. Russell:* I thank you, sir. I do not appear in the position of wanting to cross-examine any of the witnesses at all. I am here to make a statement, and not as a witness. Mr. Chairman and members of the Lands Committee, I desire to make a statement regarding the matter which is being inquired into by this Committee. On the 30th August, 1912, Mr. Hine, M.P., replying to a speech made by me in Committee of Supply, made certain statements connecting me with