

13. At that time were there any negotiations going on with the Government?—My last communication with the Government was somewhere about the middle of January.

14. At the time you were selling to Mr. Russell, were the negotiations in hand or had they been abandoned?—That I really could not tell you.

15. The land remained in your name for a considerable time?—Yes, until he took his title in December.

16. Did Mr. Russell make any arrangements with you to negotiate with the Government, or that the negotiations should go on in your name?—The title was in my name, and I do not suppose he could sell except by agreement.

17. Did he say anything to you about it?—No.

18. When you sold to Mr. Russell on the 13th March, 1911, until the title was given in December, 1911, did you have any negotiations with the Government?—No; my time expired on the 13th March, and I had no further connection with it whatever. Whatever transaction took place after that was done by Mr. Russell.

19. Did you have anything to do with the land from the 13th March?—No, he took possession on the 13th March.

20. Are you familiar with the portion of the land sold to the Government—the 1,400 acres?—Yes.

21. In your opinion what was the value of that land?—There was a stream right through it, and as the Government was taking a certain amount of the value off the property by taking the land it really reduced the value of it. They were getting the pick of the land.

22. Did you consider it reduced the value of the Runanga Estate?—One portion of it.

23. Was there any compensation on account of the road running up the valley—was that any benefit to the Runanga Estate?—I do not see that it would be.

24. You know the Pohokura Block, which belongs to the Crown?—Yes.

25. Did the acquisition of this 1,400 acres, in your opinion, improve the value of the Pohokura Block?—Yes, certainly. They could get no homestead-sites unless they had that piece of country.

26. Did you ever offer the Government sufficient land up there to make a road for nothing?—No.

27. *Mr. Forbes.*] You put a price of £4 per acre on the land?—Yes.

28. Was not that far above its value?—I did not reckon so.

29. You considered you were offering it at a fair price at £4 per acre?—Yes.

30. Why did you consider it necessary to offer a price so much above the other?—Because they were taking a certain amount of the water frontage and a certain amount of the flat country.

31. You considered it was of higher value on account of the severance from the water?—Yes.

32. *Mr. Nosworthy.*] You are quite clear, are you, that after you sold the property you had nothing to do with the negotiations that took place between the then owner and the Crown?—Quite clear—I am absolutely certain.

33. And you think Mr. Russell carried on the negotiations?—Yes. All the transactions ceased with me after the 13th March.

34. And they could not have taken place except between Mr. Russell and the Crown?—No, they could not.

35. *The Chairman.*] What was your agreement with Mr. Russell in regard to the land—it was an agreement to sell, was it?—Yes.

36. It was dated the 13th March?—Yes; I sold at a certain price, with the balance on mortgage.

37. And when had Mr. Russell to complete the transaction?—He took possession on the 13th March.

38. And when had he to complete the purchase?—His mortgage has four years to run.

39. Mr. Russell holds it now under a right of purchase?—He has taken his title and given me a mortgage. I did not get a mortgage in the first place.

40. Did you have no negotiations with the Lands Department in regard to taking the road up the Waipunga Valley prior to your sale to Mr. Russell?—No, only on that block you are speaking about—only on the country they took.

41. That is what I am talking about. Were you negotiating with the Government for the sale of the 1,404 acres?—Yes.

42. Did your negotiations cease with the Government on the 13th March?—Yes, as far as I was concerned.

43. I understood you to say that you thought this sale was detrimental to Runanga?—There was a big hill up one side, and the road runs abutting on to the hill, with water on one side.

44. Would not that be more than made up by the fact that this large block would be improved for closer settlement and that closer settlement would enhance the value of that land?—I dare say it would—that is, if the Pohokura Block were cut up and made into 1,000-acre or 1,500-acre blocks.

45. Has the Runanga Block got any other road-access?—Up the valley. It has been used by the Maoris.

46. Does Runanga front the Taupo Road?—The Taupo Road goes right through it.

47. *Mr. R. W. Smith.*] Will you tell me the date on which Mr. Russell received his title?—He became the owner on the 13th March.

48. You did not transfer then, but you held the title till when?—I could not say from memory when he got his title.

49. He was not the owner till he got his title?—Yes. The title was in my name, but I could not tell the date he got it. I think it would be about December, 1911.

50. So that you held the title to the land until December, 1911?—Yes, and then he gave me a mortgage.