

51. Then you transferred to him and he gave you a mortgage as part payment?—Yes.
52. So that if Mr. Russell had sold any of the land between March and December, the title still being in your name you would have had to consent to the transfer?—Just so.
53. *Mr. Witty.*] Did you have any negotiations with Messrs. Russell and Anthony, solicitors?—Through my solicitor only.
54. They were not acting for you, but only for Mr. Russell?—Yes, that is so.
55. It was through them that negotiations were carried on, and not by Mr. Russell?—Yes.
56. *Mr. T. W. Rhodes.*] You say the severance injuriously affected a portion of the block: can you give us any idea of the extent of the land injuriously affected?—About 8,000 acres.
57. And what is the value of that land?—It is hard to say.
58. What is the general value of the block—is it similar to the other?—You lose the water right, and it must deteriorate to a certain extent.
59. How much per acre would that land be worth—2s. 6d. or 5s. per acre?—It is hard for me to say.
60. It was on that you based the £4 per acre?—I did not base it at per acre, but I thought the estate would suffer to a certain extent by cutting a certain portion of that frontage off.
61. What would be the value of those 8,000 acres affected?—I could not say. It might have deteriorated more than 8,000 acres.
62. At what price did you sell the whole of this estate?—Well, I think that is a matter of business between Mr. Russell and myself. I am just talking of the frontage where the water is taken away from it.
63. There was three miles of water frontage taken?—Yes.
64. And it affected 8,000 acres, more or less?—It might have affected 15,000. I could not say for certain.
65. You could not give any idea of the amount of depreciation—whether it would be 1d. per acre or £1?—No.
66. To your mind that was the justification for asking the £4 per acre?—I did not say it was my reason for asking £4 per acre for the depreciation of this property.
67. What was the reason, then?—I asked £4 per acre because I thought it was well worth £4 per acre.
68. *Mr. Statham.*] Supposing the owner of the Runanga Block were going to subdivide it, would this new road be of any advantage in that subdivision?—Yes, I suppose it would.
69. It would assist the owner of Runanga?—Yes.
70. Would the fact of that road being there increase the value of the Runanga property?—I dare say it would.
71. Do you think that the fact that you got that advantage would compensate for the loss on the 8,000 acres?—I do not think a man takes that into consideration when selling a property.
72. But as the owner of the property you would take it into consideration?—There is no doubt the country would derive great benefit by the road being put in, and the settlers on the flat, than if the road had not been put there. If the Government could have got the frontages it would have improved the district. The cutting-up of Pohokura would have improved Runanga.
73. And this road, you think, would be an advantage to the Runanga Estate?—Oh, yes.
74. *Mr. Anderson.*] We were told this morning that all negotiations by the Department for the purchase of this land after the 13th March were made through you?—All negotiations ceased as far as I was concerned after the 13th March.
75. You do not know whom they were made through, do you?—Mr. Russell carried out the negotiations as far as I can understand. He made the sale to the Government.
76. But we were told here this morning that that was not so, that you as the registered owner was the man whom the Department negotiated with?—I had no communication with the Department in connection with the property whatever after some time in January.
77. When did you commence negotiations?—I think, some time in November or December.
78. And you sold on the 13th March, 1911?—Yes.
79. And after the 13th March you had no further communication with the Department?—No, none whatever.
80. Not through the solicitors either?—No.
81. *Mr. Forbes.*] Who were the solicitors acting for you?—Mr. Charles Hill for a while, and Russell and Anthony.
82. The ex Under-Secretary for Lands said this morning that all negotiations were made with the registered owner of the property. Would you know if your solicitors were acting on that basis, assuming you as the registered owner?—They might have done so, as the title was in my name.
83. But personally you had no connection with it whatever?—No.
84. You could not say whether your name appeared in the negotiations?—It might have been done by my solicitor, but not with my consent. The transaction ceased as far as I was concerned after the 13th March. Mr. Russell was then in a position to do whatever he liked.
85. And your price was £4 per acre?—Yes.
86. And you did not suggest to the Department that you would take less?—No, my price was £4 per acre.
87. *The Chairman.*] Can you explain how the letter of the 17th June, 1911, came to be written—a letter from Russell and Anthony, solicitors, Christchurch, by authority from T. Ballan, to the Hon. the Minister of Lands, explaining position of land as affected by road to be taken and offering to sell the road-area and area severed at £2 10s. per acre. Was that done with your authority?—It was done through my solicitor.