

This is my first experience of obtaining redress when I have complained of not having received any notice of the amount it was proposed to assess me at. The stereotyped answer usually being that "as I had not appealed, no alteration could be made."

I am much obliged for the attention Mr. Hyde has given to my complaint, and correspondingly sorry that his attention slipped my memory, and that I should have consequently blamed the Valuation Department when they were actually taking steps to remedy the wrong. I wish Mr. Hyde had written me when he apportioned the amounts, or a little quicker reply to mine of 7th December. I should then have known what steps were being taken to put the matter right, and should not have written your Commission giving this as an instance of neglect, which turns out to be quite the reverse.

In some cases I received notice of the intention to assess, but in other cases received no notice, and the same experience has happened to a large number of owners, for whom I am agent, the sore point being that the time goes by for them to appeal, while they are left in ignorance of the amount they are being assessed at. I hope your Commission will be able to make some recommendation to remedy cases of this sort.

I think it would assist matters if it were obligatory on the Department to announce, through the medium of the Press circulating most in the district, that the Assessment Court would sit on a certain date, that objections must be lodged so many days prior to the sitting, and that all parties who had not received notice of the amount they were to be assessed at, should apply immediately for the information. Let that notice give ample time to enable these people to get the information, and lodge their objections. But it should also be the duty of the Department to send out notices of the amount of proposed assessment to every owner, or the recognized agent for such owner.

The plan omitted from mine of 9th was sent afterwards, and, no doubt, you will have received it ere this.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary, Valuation of Lands Commission, Wellington.

J. THORNES.

REPORT ON ABOVE BY OFFICER IN CHARGE OF VALUATION DEPARTMENT, AUCKLAND.

The Valuer-General, Wellington.

19th December, 1914.

I HAVE to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, enclosing copy of an extract from a letter addressed by Mr. J. Thornes to the Chairman of the Valuation of Land Commission, and also correspondence which has passed between Mr. Thornes and the Waipa County Council. I have to advise you in this matter as under.

1/158/77: This property was revalued in 1913 (204 acres 1 rood 3 perches) at £5,100 capital value, £3,715 unimproved value, £1,385 improvements, in the joint names of David and Elizabeth Baillie. For 1914-15 the District Valuer received notice of a sale of a portion of the property (2 acres 2 roods 12 perches) to one M. H. Clark, machinist, Frankton, which was transferred to him, and the residue was put on the roll at 201 acres 2 roods 33 perches—£4,500 capital value, £3,575 unimproved value, and £985 improvements. Subsequently the valuer advised this office of the sale of the residue to Joseph Thornes, agent, Auckland, and the roll was altered accordingly.

On the 2nd November we were further advised of the distribution of this estate to the various parties who had purchased—that is, long after the local roll had been made up and forwarded to the county. The sales were as follows:—

Area.			Capital Value.	Unimproved Value.	Improvements.	—
A.	R.	P.	£	£	£	
136	3	15	3,420	2,720	700	To Baird Gilbert.
0	1	0	35	35	..	To Rogers and Stace.
36	0	25	2,160	1,360	800	To Joseph Thornes.
21	0	11	630	530	100	To Amy T. Thornes.

You will see from the foregoing that the valuation has not been altered since revision, and the alterations were made on the roll as soon as possible after we were advised of the true state of affairs. Mr. Thornes could have avoided any trouble to himself if he had forwarded the necessary information when the sale from Baillie was made. As he is a land agent, and a fairly large land speculator, the information given by Mr. Baillie that he had sold out to Thornes was probably all that he knew at the time.

Mr. Thornes in his letters to the County Clerk, or the Valuation Department, Hamilton, gives no definite information as to the disposal of the land, and it was only on the District Valuer coming to Auckland and interviewing him that he got the information necessary to make the adjustment.

19th December, 1914.

A. J. MCGOWAN, Officer in Charge.

DECISION OF COMMISSION.

No further action.
6/1/15.

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