

APPENDIX XX.

LETTER FROM W. WALTERS, PAKAKURA.

Mr. Rutherford, Member of the Valuation of Land Commission.

I NOTICE in to-day's *Herald* that your Commission has started sitting on the land-valuation business.

What I want to know is: Are we to be valued on a prospective value of about ten years or more time, or on the present value of farming land? I sold a piece of land to the Otahuhu Trotting Club for a racecourse. They could not get a piece between here and Auckland, so I put a bit on more than it was worth—viz., £65 and £40 per acre. They only paid a little cash, and they have the whole frontage to the railway of the one-half of the racecourse; you know the piece. The other half faces the Papakura Valley Road. All this farm at present is just worth what it is for farming.

Mr. Morgan, the valuer, puts the unimproved value at £33 per acre. I offered to let him the farm at 5 per cent. on that value—viz., £1 13s. per acre. He said he could not pay it. I then asked how did he expect me to do it, let alone not counting the value of improvements for nothing. He then said, "Look what it will be worth for building-sites." I told him not in his time or my own, and it was time enough then to value it at that rate.

Within two years there have been over two hundred sections sold around Papakura Station, and there are not more than twenty new houses put up.

At Takanini 50 acres were cut up right in the station and sold twelve months ago. About twenty sections sold in quarter-acre to $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and not one house built as yet. The syndicate who put it up bought most of them to keep the price; one of them I know (as he told me) bought five of the sections, and Mr. E. D. McLennan bought one to put his horse in.

When the Appeal Court sat they posted me the notice the day before they sat. I received the letter the afternoon it was all over. My son offered them one property of 70 acres, and I offered them another of over 50 acres to take at their valuation. The answer I received was, I should have been at the Court. Will you please show this letter to your Commission?

Glenora Park, Papakura, 3rd December, 1914.

W. WATERS.

REPORT ON ABOVE BY DISTRICT VALUER MORGAN.

W. Waters, Papakura.

The Officer in Charge, Valuation Office.

IN reply to memo. from Head Office of 16/12/14, covering a copy of a letter sent by Mr. W. Walters to Mr. Rutherford of the Valuation Commission, and asking for any comment thereon, I beg to say Mr. Walters mentions land sold by him a few years back at £65 and £40 per acre—56 acres 1 rood 14 perches, for £3,505—over £62 per acre. Mr. Walters has admitted since this sale that had he known that Takanini Station was to be established he would have asked more. He mentions the large amount of railway frontage that the piece has, but does not mention the small amount of their available road frontage. This land was then part of the least valuable of Mr. Walters's holding.

Mr. Walters's statement *re* leasing the farm is inaccurate. I did not say that I could not pay the rental, but I did say that I did not care for the leasehold tenure, and that the leasehold value was not necessarily a criterion of the freehold selling-value.

His statement *re* what I said is misleading. His remarks would infer that I valued his land on a building-lot basis, when he must know that such was not the case, for one of his sons has a home-stand lot of about 6 acres adjacent, which has an unimproved value of £50 per acre, and was not objected to, presumably because he will not have any land-tax to pay.

I think the other matters of complaint in Mr. Walters's letter have been fully covered by the previous letter on the subject.

It may perhaps be noted that the portion offered by Mr. Walters to the Department was at our valuation, plus 10 per cent. If the valuation is really excessive, and Mr. Walters has some land that he would sell, why did he not offer it at less than the Department's valuation, and so prove his *bona fides*.

I would again like to emphasize the fact that when I was on the property, after fully discussing the question, Mr. Walters agreed to a valuation of £40 per acre, plus the value of the buildings, and said that he thought it would be very reasonable, and, notwithstanding that, I fixed it at about £37 10s.

There are some landowners who always object when any increase is made on their previous valuation. I have valued Mr. Walters's property on three occasions, on each of which he has lodged objections.

On the occasion previous to the last he acknowledged in the Assessment Court that it was not above its selling-value, but was above its farming-value, which he then stated was from £8 to £10 per acre unimproved basis. The place was then very badly farmed. He has since improved his methods, and now allows that it is worth £20 per acre unimproved value. When he has further improved his methods, and has the whole of his land in profitable use, he may admit that it is worth over £30 just for farming purposes, and independent of its site value.

Auckland, 21st January, 1915.

EDWARD MORGAN, District Valuer.

DECISION OF COMMISSION.

Considers revaluation should be made by another valuer. If, on revaluation, the original valuation not sustained the fee to be returned.

Considers the property overvalued for farming purposes. Owner is to blame for neglect to complete objection forms.

Re sitting of Assessment Court, more than one insertion should be made in newspapers. "Local" also to be attached to advertisement for insertion.

21/1/15.