

17. What is the property fairly worth per acre?—We looked over it yesterday, and for the purpose for which it is used we considered that £60 an acre was quite high enough.

18. What is the Government valuation?—Roughly, £82 an acre.

19. Do you think if it had been sold on the market on fair and reasonable terms when the valuation was made it would have reasonably brought more than £60 an acre?—No; I think not—that is, for any purpose for which it might be used. It is away at the end of a lonely road, a bit over a mile and a half from the station.

20. It is not in a residential locality, is it?—No. It is bounded by a mud flat when the tide is out. It is not a very desirable property. We have also Mr. Philip Dawson's property, nearer the centre of the district, at the corner of Hutton and High Streets. The total area is 4 acres 1 rood 38 perches, and it has a 2-acre frontage to a road. I know that property well. I understand the present valuation is £900, unimproved value. The back allotment is rather broken and poorish land.

21. What is your opinion of a fair and reasonable value of that property supposing the buyer and seller were acting reasonably?—To my mind, the unimproved value of the 2 acres, which have a road frontage, is £250 an acre, or £500, and £60 an acre for the broken land at the back: a total of £650 for the lot.

22. As against £900 put on by the Valuation Department?—Yes; as against the value appearing on the rate-books.

23. I think you said that the 2 acres at the back appeared in the Department's books valued at £300?—I do not know that it appears in the books in that way, but Mr. Dawson told me that that was the way they arrived at it. The back portion, practically  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres, is rented to a neighbour at £10 a year. The rates come to £3 15s., leaving £6 5s. to pay interest on £300.

24. What is the tenant using it for?—Grazing cows, I think.

25. What is the next property you have to remark about?—That of Mr. Thomas Shepherd. That is a property of 5 acres and 27 perches, nearer the station, on the Wamsley Road. The unimproved value just over three years ago, according to the Government valuation, was £1,350, and the unimproved value at the last valuation was £2,425, an increase of a little over £1,075. Mr. Shepherd has gone to the trouble of putting in a road, and has sold a few sections, and because he has sold a few sections the valuers assume it is all worth the same, although the owner has not been able to sell it.

26. Is there a demand for that kind of property in the neighbourhood?—It is very limited. There have been no sales for some considerable time.

27. What is the land used for?—At present, for running horses and cows. It is three-quarters of a mile from the centre of the town. We have compared the valuation with that of Mr. W. E. Lippiatt, a neighbour on the eastern side. He has 10 acres of land, and his unimproved value is £2,000, whereas Mr. Shepherd, for half the quantity of land, is valued at £2,425.

28. *The Chairman.*] Has Mr. Lippiatt cut up any of his?—No.

29. *Mr. McVeagh.*] Is it equally adaptable for cutting up as Mr. Shepherd's?—I think so. It is a trifle deeper, if anything.

30. *Mr. Campbell.*] Is it further away from the railway-station?—They adjoin each other.

31. Can you suggest any reason for the disparity of the valuation of two adjoining sections?—No; it is most unfair. The only reason I can see is that Mr. Shepherd has been able to sell a few sections, and the Valuation Department has deemed that the remainder of the land is of the value of that sold. Mr. Lippiatt has not sold any, and is deemed not to have the same value.

32. We have it that Mr. Shepherd's property is valued at £485 per acre. What is it really worth, in your opinion?—I consider £350 is a fair valuation. I might also mention Mrs. Wingate's property adjoining, at the corner of Station Road and the road on which Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Lippiatt live. Her previous valuation was £1,200, and it is now £2,200, and the area, according to the assessment, is 3 acres 2 roods 24 perches.

33. *The Chairman.*] How many houses are there on it?—One dwelling. It is not on the market in sections. It is just the home where the Wingate's have lived for twenty or thirty years.

34. *Mr. McVeagh.*] Do you know of anything in the circumstances of the property, or of the district itself, to justify such an increase in the valuation as from £1,200 to £2,200 in three years?—I do not.

35. What is your opinion as to the true value of Mrs. Wingate's property?—I think it is worth just about as much as Mr. Shepherd's. It is not very deep, and runs into a triangle at the back. About £350 an acre would be a fair value. There is one thing in regard to Mr. Shepherd's property. A seven-roomed house in which he lives is valued at £300, whereas he has a shed on the section adjoining which is valued at £200. It seems a ridiculous comparison.

36. He has not got sufficient credit for improvements, and accordingly has to pay more in taxes?—I do not know that it affects his property very much, but it is rather a peculiar thing, I think.

37. Did you inspect Mr. H. J. Mitchell's property?—Yes. He has 2 acres at the corner of Avenue Road and Church Street. In 1911 the unimproved value for one acre was £230 and for the other £240. In 1914 the £230 acre was valued at £430 and the £240 piece was valued at £375, an increase in the two acres of £335.

38. Is there anything at all connected with the property or the district to justify the increase that has been made in the unimproved value?—I do not think so. One or two houses have been built near him, but they are only small cottages. I estimate the value of the property at £250 an acre—£500 as against £805.

39. Did you examine the property of Mr. James Murphy?—Yes. That is rather a central piece of land between Station Road and Avenue Road. It has three frontages, and alongside it is a section owned by Mr. Shepherd. Mr. Shepherd has two pieces of land there, and each has a different valuation. We do not know why. Mr. Murphy's total area is 4 acres 2 roods 12 perches, valued at