

31. Do you know that there is a considerable portion of the property behind the hill?—I was on the property behind the first hill.

32. It is an impossibility to inspect my property from Taylor's, and it is an impossibility to inspect Mr. French's property from the points that you mention. Now I come to Mr. Speedy's property. Did you inspect that?—I saw part of it from the Black Hill. I went up the road and saw the lie of the country from there, and then I was over on D. Speedy's, and got on to the boundary, and I was on the boundary again at the back of Cameron's.

33. And you call that inspecting Speedy's?—You can tell the class of country. If a man has a thousand acres you surely do not expect the valuer to ride over every acre of it.

34. Can you tell the state of a man's fences and the sward of grass the country is carrying at a distance of three miles?—I was not half a mile away.

35. You were two miles away from some of mine when you inspected it?—No. I may have been two miles away from the far side of it.

*Mr. Ryder:* I am not going to ask Mr. Souness any more questions, because it is utterly useless. His inspection, as far as my place is concerned, has not taken place. He saw the good part of it; that is all.

36. *The Valuer-General* (to witness).] When you talk about inspecting a property do you mean that you walk over every inch of the property?—No. I would not have been done now if I had had to go over every bit of the Castlepoint County. You have to look at the general condition of it, and that is all you can do. If I was valuing for a loan I might give a little longer time, but I could not have done Mr. Ryder's even in two days.

37. How long have you been familiar with the work of inspecting private lands?—I have been doing it steadily for twelve years.

38. Did you ever hear of a valuer walking over the whole of a property of 3,000 acres?—Never.

39. When you talk of inspecting a property you mean that you have seen it from different aspects?—That is all I can do.

40. How long would it take to value Castlepoint County if you had to walk over every yard of it?—It would not be done yet, even if I was only supposed to go over every acre.

41. You say you arranged with Mr. Ryder as to his value?—That is so. We had a little bit of "barrack."

42. Did you discuss the improvements?—Yes.

43. The length of fencing?—Yes, and I told him where there was a fence, and he told me it was a new one.

44. And you took his word?—Yes.

WILLIAM HERBERT FRENCH examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a farmer, residing at Mangakapapa.

2. *Mr. Ryder.*] Did Mr. Souness arrange the value with you before or after he made his inspection?—We had rather a dispute over it. Mr. Souness told me that he already had the particulars of my property—as to the value of fencing, and so forth—and I asked him what they were. He said there were so many acres of bush felled and in grass, and so many hundred chains of fencing. It was quite foreign to me.

3. Has this bush been felled that you speak of?—It is still standing.

4. Do you mean that Mr. Souness told you that bush had been burned and put down in grass when the bush was still standing?—Yes.

5. Did he make an inspection of the property?—Not more than is around the house, so far as I am aware.

WILLIAM SOUNESS re-examined.

1. *The Valuer-General.*] You have heard the statement just made by Mr. French. Can you explain it?—The particulars I gave Mr. French were the particulars from the 1907 valuation. I did not say how much bush had been felled. I showed from the valuation how much had been felled before and how much was in grass. That came out at 802 acres in grass, and out of that there were 702 acres belonging to the Crown and 100 acres belonging to the tenant. I gave him those particulars from the book, and that is what we discussed. I did not know what he had felled, but I wanted to find out, for that was the only means by which I could arrive at what he had done himself.

2. Before a valuation takes place you are supplied, are you not, with a field-book of the last valuation, showing the full details of improvements. You have that and show it to the settlers, and if there are additions to the improvements they are supplied after consultation?—Yes. That is how we get the fresh work in.

ALBERT JOHN SPEEDY re-examined.

1. *Mr. Ryder.*] You have heard the evidence. Did Mr. Souness inspect your property?—He visited my house and stated his business, and I asked him if he was going to ride over the property and inspect it. He said he had seen it from the Black Hill Road. I said I did not think that was sufficient, but he said he thought it was, as he had the previous valuation as a basis. On that he sat down and made out a valuation, which, I may say, is reasonable enough. It is not too high from a seller's point of view, but it is very high compared with some other valuations in the county. Mr. Souness has said he viewed the property from four points, but three of them must have been after he made his valuation. He could see three miles across my property from one place where he was. I think there are valuers here to-day who know