

17. *Mr. Campbell.*] Would not the wind be apt to blow them clean out in the exposed places?—Yes.

18. *Mr. Skerrett.*] You gave the details of the sheep-carrying capacity of the various blocks in the estate to Mr. Monrad: you heard the particulars of the sheep read out by Mr. Monrad: are they correct?—No, there is one inaccuracy. Section 21, the Hermitage Block, some years does not carry any sheep at all.

19. Why will it not carry sheep some years?—It is very high country, and the snow is very heavy. It is the end of the range, and there is no grass on it, but there is snow-grass, and mountain daisy, and a little danthonia in a few gullies.

20. I may take it that the carrying-capacity of the various blocks given by Mr. Monrad, with the exception of Section 21, is correct?—Yes.

21. And Section 21 is overestimated?—That is so.

#### STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF VALUATION DEPARTMENT.

*Cyrus James Lovatt* (Chief Clerk, Valuation Department): I have no witnesses to call. I just want to make a statement. Mangaohane Block was valued on the 31st March last, during the revision of Erewhon Riding of the Hawke's Bay County. The valuation roll was put on public inspection, and that fact was duly advertised in the local papers. In addition, the valuation notice was sent to the owner, care of W. J. Stratton, accountant, Hastings. No objection was lodged, and the valuation was affirmed in the usual way. Evidence is now being brought before this Commission to show that the valuation is excessive. I would suggest that the owner make application for a revaluation under section 36 of the Valuation of Land Act, and whatever the result of that revaluation is, due notice will be served on the owner, and the right of objection given. It has been stated that if the valuation is not altered the owner will not have the right of appeal, but that has never been the attitude of the Department in the case of revaluations under section 36 of the Act. If an application for a new valuation is made in this case, notice will be issued in the ordinary way, and the full right of objection given, with recourse to the Assessment Court if considered necessary.

1. *The Chairman.*] Which valuer made the valuation?—Mr. Lloyd, district valuer of Hastings.

2. What do you say on the question of the original valuer making the revaluation?—It has been the practice to send the valuer who has jurisdiction in the district. There is nothing to prevent the Valuer-General sending another valuer.

3. In the course of our inquiries we had a case at Westport where the valuation was complained of, and the Department sent a different valuer to make a revaluation?—That is so. It has been done in certain cases where the Valuer-General has felt it was in the interests of the Department to do so.

4. It is not a uniform rule?—No. Each case is dealt with on its merits. In regard to the Westport case, I should say that the valuer in charge of the district is the district valuer at Nelson, and the valuer who made the first value was merely a local valuer working under him.

5. *Mr. Campbell.*] For which the district valuer was responsible?—Yes.

6. The owner of the property has no right to object to the same valuer being sent?—No.

7. It lies entirely with the Department whether they choose to send the same valuer or not?—That is quite true.

8. *Mr. Skerrett.*] Do you consider in this case it would be proper to send an independent valuer, with the facts now within your knowledge?—That is really a matter for the Valuer-General to pass an opinion on, but, personally, I do not see that there is any reason why the same valuer should not be sent to make that revaluation, seeing that the owner has the full right of objection and recourse to the Assessment Court.

9. He pays for something which he knows is a mere formal step in the proceedings?—It may not be. If the valuer finds he has made a mistake he will alter it.

#### REQUEST OF THE MANGAOHANE TRUSTEES STATED.

*The Chairman* (to Mr. Skerrett): What do you ask the Commission specifically?

*Mr. C. P. Skerrett, K.C.*: I understood that under the order of reference you had power to inquire into individual cases. I apprehend it would be open to this Commission to consider whether in this case it should not recommend the employment of an independent valuer on the part of the Valuation Department upon any application for a new valuation being made. Our reason for coming to the Commission mainly was that, in the view I took of the statute, if upon a revaluation the Government valuer did not alter his valuation there was no appeal to the Assessment Court. The reason I say there is no appeal to the Assessment Court is that appeal only lies in an alteration in the assessment roll. The next matter I desire to point out is that we are in the hands of the Department to a large extent as to whether we shall get an Assessment Court. This matter is one of great urgency. There are no provisions for constituting these Assessment Courts for considering appeals from revision, and the Department may delay setting up the Court. Anyway, we have to wait until the Department chooses to set up the Assessment Court. It is not a regular Assessment Court, but an extraordinary Assessment Court, arising from an alteration in the assessment roll.