

information of its value being first obtained?—I said, in fairness to all parties, it would be desirable *Hon. Dr. Pollen.*  
that its value should be tested and ascertained by scientific exploration.

19. Did you write to Mr. Vogel and to Sir Donald McLean to that effect?—I put memoranda *5th Oct., 1876.*  
on the papers.

20. Are you aware whether other lands in the Waikato have been applied for at 5s. per acre, cash paid down, and that these offers have been refused?—I remember on one occasion a Mr. Dilworth, who, if I recollect rightly, had been allowed to purchase some land on the other side of Taupiri, having made further application to be allowed to purchase, it was refused, and he was not allowed to purchase, for the simple reason that the land he desired to acquire was covered by Native claims for compensation.

21. Do you not consider, whatever may have been the manner of dealing with these confiscated lands prior to the time of the passing of the Act of 1866, that after the inauguration of the Public Works policy it was to be presumed that the lands would have given to them an additional value, from the construction of railways, and that therefore the Government was bound to have held the lands until they received that additional value for them?—No doubt the railways have given an additional value to all the lands in Waikato.

22. Apart from any opinion as to the value of this land, do you not think it inexpedient for any Government to sell large blocks of land without the test of public competition?—Well, I think, as a general proposition, that may be answered in the affirmative. It is not expedient to do so. But I can quite understand particular circumstances may arise rendering it expedient to do so.

23. Do you think there was any special necessity for this engagement being concluded in so short a time without the public receiving notice?—I think there was a question of public interest involved in it. Undoubtedly the drainage of this swamp could not be carried out without a large expenditure of capital. For a long time it had been the centre of Native disaffection in the neighbourhood of Waikato, and a constant source of danger to the settlements there; therefore I think it was worth the while of the Government, having that fact in view, to deal with the land in the way they did. On grounds of public policy, and considering the state of the district, it was not, I think, at all inexpedient to sell it.

24. But the sale was not in accordance with any existing regulations?—It was not.

25. *Hon. Sir D. McLean.*] I was just going to ask whether there was not a large quantity of confiscated land in the Waikato which had been offered for years at an upset price, for which there was no offer whatever?—I have before me the Auckland Provincial Government *Gazette* of January 1867. I find that Mr. Whitaker, who was then Superintendent of the Province of Auckland, when appointed General Government Agent at Auckland, upon his election as Superintendent, was also appointed Commissioner for the management of the sale and disposition of the Waikato lands. In 1866, regulations were made for the disposal of the confiscated lands. I do not recollect the date; but I think it was about 23rd November, 1866. In January 1867, there was a notification published of a large quantity of land which would be open for sale in the Waikato District. Those lands were classified as follows:—There were 43,000 acres of first-class land open to be selected at 15s. per acre; 216,000 acres of what was called second-class land open for selection at 10s. per acre; and 324,000 acres, including 153,000 acres of swamp, which was classified as third-class, open for selection at the price of 5s. per acre. This particular swamp which is now the subject of inquiry was included in the 153,000 acres of swamp, which was open to be selected at 5s. per acre. This land sale was advertised pretty nearly in every Australian colony, and certainly in every newspaper in this colony. Great expectations were entertained by the Provincial Government, which, out of £100,000 of colonial funds placed at its disposal, had spent a large sum in making roads to open up the lands; but the result of the sale was, in round numbers, about as much money as would pay for the cost of the advertisements. The land remained open from that time for selection by anybody who liked, until those regulations were superseded by subsequent ones passed in 1871.

26. Then they have been open according to that from 1866 up to 1871?—The terms upon which selection could be made were these: Deposit upon application, 20 per cent; within three months from the date of sale, 20 per cent.; within six months, 20 per cent.; within nine months, 20 per cent.; and within twelve months, 20 per cent. The payments for these lands, of the 15s. as well as the 5s. class, were spread over a period of twelve months. After the failure of the expectations of this sale, it was determined that the claims for compensation which existed over all the confiscated lands should be satisfied by the issue of scrip exercisable for the purchase of confiscated lands in the Waikato. Within the next year the scrip was issued amongst a number of the claimants, but its price in the market was extremely small. Probably swamp land might have been bought with scrip at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per acre. In fact, all these lands, so far as purchase was concerned, within two or three years, could easily have been had at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per acre—certainly for 2s. 6d. per acre, the market price of the scrip being from 60 to 70 per cent. discount.

27. You mention, Dr. Pollen, that there were difficulties arising from some disaffected Natives residing in that vicinity. I just want to ask you whether you consider the formation of that road, connecting the Waikato with the navigable rivers, would not in a great measure remove that Native difficulty?—I believe it would. As a fact, it has had considerable effect already. We have been able to negotiate for the purchase of lands with Natives who previously had been entirely estranged from us.

28. Are you aware that for the last twenty years no peaceable possession of lands could be taken at the Piako in consequence?—I am quite aware of that.

29. In your opinion, would having this road made to the Waikato as a matter of policy very much lessen the expenditure for the defence of the country?—Certainly.

30. *Mr. Sheehan.*] I observe, Dr. Pollen, in a minute by yourself, in answer to a request by the Native Minister to inform him what is the average value per acre of the block, and what would be a fair estimate of the cost of the work, that you say, "It is impossible to make any reliable estimate of the cost of such works, or even to assert their practicability, without some exploration, and the taking of flying levels over the whole swamp. Upon the information thus derived, and the conclusion as to its drainability to be deduced therefrom, a fair estimate of the value of the land itself can only be