

able, not only for the military settlers, but in order to square up the surveys, so that there should be no rugged outline. That, of necessity, took me some distance into the swamp. The colonel of the militia regiment sent his adjutant or one of his captains, a gentleman named Brown, to examine whether this land could be taken up. There were continual disputes between him and his officers and my surveyors as to whether the land was fit for military settlement. At last they refused to take any more of it. It was my duty, as Chief Surveyor, to put them as near to Hamilton as I could, and to make available all the land, if possible. However, they refused to take any more of it, and ultimately I had some land surveyed at Lake Waikare, fifteen miles off, for them.

280. I think it was generally admitted that the military settlers were entitled to have two-thirds dry land?—I should not have given them less than two-thirds.

281. Do you not know that because it did not contain two-thirds dry land, was the basis upon which Colonel Moule objected to this land?—I believe so.

282. Do you consider a fair proportion of dry land was surveyed into allotments for the military settlers?—Yes.

283. And any that was not surveyed would not be fit for them?—It was very stiff indeed. If there was no valid reason for their objecting, I said they ought to take the land. They stood out and refused where they possibly could. The surveyors whom I employed were contract surveyors, and it was to their interest to push their lines as far as they could into the swamp.

284. *The Chairman.*] If there was error at all, it was on the side of taking in too much swamp?—It was in carrying my surveys into the swamp.

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TUESDAY, 12TH OCTOBER, 1875.

EDWARD O'MEARA, being in attendance, was examined as follows:—

*Mr. E. O'Meara.*

285. *The Chairman.*] Do you know anything of the transaction between the Government and Mr. Thomas Russell, and of the agreement entered into between them?—I know nothing about the transaction. All I know is about the land. 12th Oct., 1875.

286. Are you acquainted with the block in question?—I know the portion which adjoins the Mangawara River to the North, and extends to the lots laid out for the military up the Komakorau and Tauhei Creeks.

287. You are acquainted with the north-western side of the block?—Yes.

288. What extent of land within the block are you acquainted with?—About 20,000 acres or so.

289. *Mr. Rolleston.*] You have a general knowledge of the whole of that?—That is the only portion I have been through.

290. *The Chairman.*] Will you describe the character of the land with which you are acquainted?—It is low, swampy land. I am acquainted with that part between the Komakorau and the Tauhei. My surveys on the other side of the Mangawara came up as far as the land higher up, to where the confiscated line goes. I, at one time, arranged where the line would run, along with a Mr. Marshall, Native officer.

291. Are you not acquainted with the land so far down as Pukemokimoki?—Yes.

292. Will you tell the Committee what you mean by saying the land is low? What are we to understand from your description? Is it overflowed by the flood waters of the Waikato?—When a fresh comes down the Waikato River, instead of going down its course the water is all banked up in these little creeks, which come out of the swamp, but which will ultimately form the arterial drainage of the swamp. The water is banked up and overflows.

293. To what distance does the flood water extend over the block in question?—Perhaps in one part it would go in forty chains. I have seen quite a mile of it under water, and the water up to one's middle.

294. What is the character of the land higher up the Tauhei? Is it swampy?—It is a kind of rush and flax, with some thin tea-tree.

295. What will be the proportion lying high above the general level of the waters of the Waikato?—When I was District Surveyor, I asked a surveyor, who is now Resident Engineer in the Waikato, to take the levels when making the traverse of the Mangawara River, so as to ascertain what the height was, and I told him I would try and get him paid by the Government for his trouble. But the Government would not make him any advance for doing it, and of course he kept the levels.

296. What is the character of the soil?—Black, mud soil, if you can call it soil—black peat.

297. Have you seen any portions of it dry without reclamation? Have you seen grass grow upon it?—I have never seen grass grow upon this side. I have upon what Mr. Dilworth bought.

298. In the upper portion of the land you have described, is there any dry land? Any in front of the ridges of the hills?—None except this (witness described the part on the map).

299. What I mean is, any land fit for settlement without reclamation?—Oh no. We took all the good land we could find when surveying for the military settlements; in fact some of the allotments were condemned, and I got into bad favour with the military, who would not take them.

300. Owing to there being too much swamp?—Yes.

301. You do not know of any tongues of dry land, abutting on to the swamp, available for settlement, which were not surveyed into sections?—No.

302. Can you give the Committee any idea whether the swamp would be difficult of reclamation by drainage?—It would take a great lot of money indeed to drain it. As I have already told the Committee, whenever a flood comes into the Waikato the water runs up these creeks, which will form the system of drainage afterwards, and covers the place with water until the floods subside again.

303. That would also have the effect of preventing the outflow of the local water?—It would for the time being.

304. *Sir George Grey.*] Do you know what is the level of the interior part of the swamp? What is its height above the river?—Mr. Breen, who took the levels at my request, told me it was forty feet