

## SECTION 28.—FRANCIS McPARLAND, CLAIMANT.

CLAIMANT, sworn: I bought this section from John Munro, acting as agent for W. J. Patterson, for £65. I paid rent upon the section until the Government refused to accept it. I have not done anything to the section. With a fourteen years' lease it might be worth £2 10s. or £3 a year. I intended to build on it, and went so far as to place the material on the ground; but in consequence of the insecurity of the title I delayed the work. I had gone so far as to call for tenders for the erection of the building, when I received a note from Mr. Mackay stating that it would be better not to build until the tenure was settled.

Mr. MACKAY said the section was not required for railway purposes.

[Case closed.]

## SECTION 29.—WILLIAM MAILER, CLAIMANT.

CLAIMANT, sworn: I am the original allottee. I have built upon the section an iron store, which I value at £205. It cost me more than that when I erected it in July, 1874. £2 10s a year is a fair rental for the ground. I do not know whether a lease for twenty-one years would make it any more valuable, or worth any more than that per year. It might be worth one-third more. I have paid rent to January, 1875.

By the COMMISSIONERS: The statement attached to your claim puts the value of your shop at £280. How do you account for the inconsistency?—If the statement puts it at £280, it is incorrect.

By Mr. MACKAY: In the valuation you gave me you estimated the premises as being worth £180 and the section at £75, making £255 in all?—That must have been an oversight. I never intended to send in any valuation for the section. I simply wish to claim for the improvements I have made. I received the section in lieu of a freehold one in Gladstone Street, which had only 12 feet frontage. I paid £36 a year for it, being at the rate of £3 a foot.

[Case closed.]

## SECTIONS 30, 31, 32.—BAILLIE and HUMPHREY, CLAIMANTS.

Mr. HUMPHREY, examined by the Commissioners, stated: We are in possession of the sections enumerated. Our store is built upon them. Nos. 31 and 32 were allotted to us by Mr. Commissioner Sharp, the other was acquired by purchase. I value the improvements on all the sections at £750. Taking the sections together in the block, I consider their annual value for a lease of fourteen years would be £15; for twenty-one years' lease it would be a little more, say £20. We have 99 feet frontage to Palmerston Street. I paid £10 for the section I bought from Williams. I believe he got it in lieu of a place in Gladstone Street, which I think was freehold. I do not know whether he got compensation otherwise. The site we are on is a good site for our business. £20 a year would be 3s. a foot. It is perhaps a low rental, but there is little demand for property in this town. It is difficult to arrive at a correct estimate of what the value of the ground would be. As agent for a gentleman in Christchurch, I have let freehold sections in the neighbourhood of the Empire Hotel at 6s. 8s. per foot.

By Mr. MACKAY: Freehold section No. 6 is let at 6s 8d. a foot for a period of seven years. Whatever buildings are on the ground are to be left at the expiration of the term. The *Buller News* and a store belonging to Mr. Corr are erected on that section. I have let other ground at 14s., and a corner section at 28s. per foot. Freehold section No. 103, at the corner of Pakington Street, is let for fourteen years at 18s. a foot; the rest of the ground has been let for some time at 6s. 8d. a foot. The conditions of lease are that all buildings are to be left. There is a large hotel at the corner of this section, known as the Red Lion. There is a chemist's shop, and also Manson's draper's shop on it. In my opinion, the Coal Reserve is the best side of the street; but I do not think the difference is very great. The Coal Reserve is certainly the best side for business. I consider the leases I have made as fair leases. Of course we tried to get as much for the ground as we could; but I must explain that the applicants came to us, we did not go to them. The ground upon which Mr. Richardson's shop stands (section 103) is let for fourteen years at 14s. per foot. The *Buller News* is a seven years' lease, of which five years are to run. We would not let the lease of this ground now at 6s. 8d. per foot. If we had it to let now, we would charge 10s. a foot. The same valuation would rule with regard to Manson's. The corner lot was let within the last three months. The property has of course improved very much since the Empire Hotel was built, and houses began to multiply in the neighbourhood.

By Mr. FISHER (through the Court): The value of these sections to let per foot three years ago, before the street was made by the Provincial Government and the reserve was cleared, was virtually nothing. My principals in Christchurch sent me from time to time very arbitrary prices they expected to receive per foot, but I could not get those prices. They were much too high. I have a good deal of land now that is not let, but I do not receive any offers for it. The land transactions of the last twelve months have been very few. The business requirements of the town in that respect are now very limited. The lower part of the town near the Empire Hotel is the best for business. The principal portion of the inhabitants live there, and, for retail trade, where the population is there of course the business will be. For wholesale purposes, the south end of the town is best. If it had not been for the promises of the Superintendent we would never have come up to this end of the town, because we could have bought good freehold sections in other parts of the town which would have suited us equally well; consequently I maintain that we are entitled to fourteen years' lease.

By the COMMISSIONERS: The completion of the railway and the protective works will of course tend to increase the value of all the sections on the Colliery Reserve. I wish to qualify that statement in this way: I don't think the town itself will increase very much by reason of the completion of the railway. I think it will become a kind of depôt. The population will be located on the coal field. I believe, however, that the completion of the railway will increase the value of property in the town by about one-third in two years' time. I believe the coal trade will be developed in two years