

known as possible?—Yes; instructions were given through the Defence Office to make it as public as possible that the Commission had been appointed, and to render every assistance to applicants.

124. Was it possible for the Commission to give consideration to any claims except those made by application, and a few which the Commission were able to discover from petitions to the House and from the records in the Defence Office?—I do not think the Commission could have taken any other course than that they did take to bring the matter to the notice of claimants.

125. Had the Commission in many cases to supplement the information given by applicants themselves by making inquiries on their own account?—Yes; in many cases.

126. Were any of those, do you know, successful?—I really forget. I think it is very likely.

127. With regard to the old soldiers, did the Commission, in your opinion, deal in a favourable manner with their claims?—I think the Commission dealt very liberally with the old soldiers, on the ground that it would be the last opportunity given to them to make their claims.

128. Something has been said with regard to the soldiers who went from one district to another: would the going from one district to another necessarily bar their claims in cases where they got a permit?—There was no power to give a permit.

129. There were cases inquired into by the Commission with regard to men who went to the East Coast?—Yes.

130. Were none of these cases favourably considered?—I do not think we recognized that any man leaving his district on any ground whatever was entitled to the land.

131. Even if he came back again?—He might be absent for twelve months out of the five years.

132. There were some cases of special hardship referred to the Commission in connection with Colonel Nixon's and Major Jackson's men?—Yes.

133. In your individual opinion, were these cases specially hardly dealt with?—I do not think so. The Commission gave their grounds for recommending as they did in their report. They entered into the matter rather minutely and explained why they refused these claims.

134. With reference to the Commission not having sat as a whole at each place: did any portions of the Commission arrive at a decision without first consulting the Commission as a whole?—No.

135. In point of fact, did they not simply take evidence upon the matter?—Yes; that was the way.

136. Unless further time had been given, do you think it was possible for the Commission to enter more exhaustively into the question?—Impossible. We were constantly at work during the four months without intermission.

137. In your opinion, are there many old soldiers still within the colony whose claims have been barred by the Commission unfairly?—I do not think there is one.

138. *Mr. McMillan.*] Is the evidence taken by the individual members of the Commission at the various towns on record?—Generally speaking, I think it is. In all difficult cases it would be fully entered.

139. You say that the Commission took every opportunity to give publicity to the fact of their sitting? Was it also understood that this would be the last opportunity these claims would have of being entertained?—No; the Commission could not do that of course. They did not state that no other opportunity would be given to claimants.

140. We have got the evidence of the claimants that were recommended, and also of a number of the claimants who were rejected; but the difficulty arises that in the petitions there might be some that were rejected by the Commission; and there is no evidence to show what actuated the Commission in excluding them?—I think probably in some cases there would be no evidence. If any evidence was taken it would be shown why the application was granted or refused.

141. From your knowledge of the petitioners whose claims were not recommended by the Commission, and in view of the circumstances, do you think that if grants of land were offered to persons within the provincial districts in respect to which the claims were adjudicated on, subject to settlement—do you think they would avail themselves of it?—Subject to the four years regulations?

142. Yes?—I do not think so in many cases.

143. You state that from your general knowledge?—Yes.

144. *Mr. Brown.*] At what number of places did the Commission sit?—At Wellington, Auckland, Thames, Napier, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Dunedin, Christchurch, Oamaru, and Blenheim.

145. And it was advertised in all the country papers?—Yes; I think in every paper in the colony.

146. *The Chairman.*] Was information given to each claimant of the grounds on which his application was rejected?—No.

147. They did not know?—No; they were not informed.

148. Were they informed that their claims should have been founded on the fact of their residing in the provincial district, and not simply for length of service?—No; they were not informed by the Commission of any reasons.

148A. Did they know it?—They ought to have known it. They knew the conditions under which the land was offered to them, and that the period of four years' residence was required.

149. How do you account for so many fresh applications coming in?—Well, every man who thinks he has a chance of getting a piece of land or a sum of money will ask for it. A great many think there is nothing like importunity, and that they have nothing to do but go to their member to present a petition for them.

150. *Mr. Fulton.*] Was it not a fact that a very large number of applications were in the handwriting of one person?—In some districts.

151. By a person who had got up those claims?—Yes.