

live-fences planted. I should say that certainly not less than £500 to £600 has been expended upon the property, exclusive of the buildings. These are of the best description and fitted with all the latest improvements: the stables, saddle-rooms, buggy-house, &c., are all concreted and match-lined, as well as the men's quarters. The house, stable, lodge, &c., are undeniably worth about £3,000; the property-tax valuer put them down at £3,500.

The following particulars of the value of land, of properties sold and for sale, will support my valuation: (2.) Professor Thomas gave £1,600 for one acre and three-quarters and house three years ago. This property is only divided from Mr. Stark's by a piece of land about three acres in extent. House cost £450, leaving £1,250, or a little over £700 per acre, as the price of the land. (3.) Hammond's paddock, next to Mr. Stark's and adjoining Professor Thomas's, is under offer to a Mr. Tanner for £1,500 the lot, or £500 an acre: it is entirely unimproved, and has no buildings on it. (4.) Mr. Le Bailley bought a piece of land consisting of four and a half acres from a Mr. McLeod, for which he gave £2,700; the house had been burnt down, and Mr. Le Bailley bought the bare land itself for that sum. The property is situated just below Professor Thomas's, and very near Mr. Stark's property. Equal to £600 per acre. (5.) A piece of land adjoining Mr. Le Bailley's, which has been cut up into allotments, has been subdivided, and is selling at £6 per foot frontage, or £1,800 per acre. (6.) Vauxhall, opposite Professor Thomas's and adjoining Mr. Stark's property, is selling at £1 15s. to £2 5s. per foot on west side of the road, and £3 per foot, or £900 per acre, on east side, next to Professor Thomas's. (7.) Next to Mr. Le Bailley's is a block of land belonging to Mr. Justice Gillies and another. It has been subdivided, and the owners are asking £10 per foot for it. I believe some of it has been sold at that price, but am not quite certain. (8.) A piece of land next to Mr. Le Bailley's, but nearer Mr. Stark's, has been subdivided, and is selling at £2 per foot, or £600 an acre. (9.) The land opposite Mr. Stark's lodge gates, belonging to a Mr. Hall, has been selling at £1 10s. to £1 15s. per foot. This land is unimproved, is very indifferent, and has no sea-frontage. (10.) Unimproved land at Lake Takapuna, four miles away from Mr. Stark's property, is selling at £175 to £200 per acre. I myself was asked £175 per acre for some the other day.

I think the above will be sufficient to show that I am moderate in my estimate of the value of Mr. Stark's property, which is as follows: House, lodge, buildings, and improvements (a low estimate), £3,500; land taken for battery purposes and house, 6 acres 1 rood, at £600 per acre, £3,750; to 5,029ft. of frontage left for sale as per plan, at an average of £2 per foot, £10,058: total, £17,308. Mr. Stark's original plan showed 8,500ft. of frontage; but, from the position of the land retained by Government, the balance cannot be cut up so advantageously, and the result is less.

*Mode of Disposal.*—I would suggest that the land be sold by public auction upon following terms: One-fourth cash, and the balance in from three to four years. These terms would give people of moderate means a chance of obtaining a seaside section, and I believe many would go in for one.

*Time of Sale.*—The present is a time of great depression, and auctioneers and land agents are complaining that there is no demand for properties. Every one wishes to sell instead of to buy. When the tramway which is in course of construction is completed to the lake it will, I think, increase the chance of selling these sections. I would recommend, therefore, that the sections be not put into the market for twelve months.

In conclusion, I would refer to an absurd report that Mr. Stark offered his house and ten acres of land three years ago for £3,500. He is not here to deny it; but does it stand to reason that, at a time when, as I have shown in my report, land was selling all round him at an average of £600 per acre, he was going to give ten acres of land away? It would mean this, as no one can get away from the fact that the house and improvements cost over £3,000.

From my experience of Compensation Courts I should say that, if Mr. Stark had produced the evidence of the price of land which is in this report, he would have got as much as or more than has been awarded him, and the very people who say he has got too much would have given evidence against the Government and in his favour.

I have, &c.,

H. M. BREWER,  
Land Purchase Officer.

The Acting Under-Secretary for Public Works,  
Wellington.

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### No. 37.

The Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS to the Hon. the MINISTER of DEFENCE.

REFERRED to the Hon. the Minister of Defence.—Herewith please find report on plan for disposal of such portions of land adjoining the Takapuna Battery-site as may not be required, also plan of proposed subdivision. You will notice that it is proposed to sell all the land lying to the south-east of the battery. If you approve will you be good enough to allow other Ministers to see report and plan?

E. RICHARDSON.

16th April, 1886.