

beyond it requires, if not absolutely purchased, to have the right to shoot established over it?—Yes.

236. Do you think the same thing applies to what has been purchased? Would we have to make the same arrangements in regard to what has been purchased?—I think you might be forced eventually, but it is not likely at the present moment; but you might if you held on to the range. You ought to have bought an eighty-yard band on the Town Belt.

237. *Mr. Macdonald.*] With respect to the short range: we have had it in evidence that it is the intention of the owner of Section 5 to open up this road as soon as the lease is out. Now, what is your opinion of the short range?—The road does not exist at the present moment; but if you want me to look at the possibility of it existing, then I say, if the road is made, certain precautions will have to be taken.

238. Of what nature?—They would consist of look-out parties with danger-flags, and whenever the party hoisted the flags the firing would have to cease. That is with regard to the road, and supposing the country on each side of the road was under our control.

239. If it is not under our control the range is quite unsafe?—Yes.

240. The range can be shut at any moment, if they chose, by the owners of the adjoining land?—If any one chose to sit there you could not turn them away. As far as I can make out, the ranges have got no background.

241. That is the peculiarity—no background. Very unusual, is it not, if one has to buy a range not to have sufficient background?—Well, if I were commissioned to buy a range I should make an arrangement for a shooting right over it for twenty years.

242. What is the effect of the new rifles now being used?—You want 2,500 yards behind your target if you have the magazine rifle.

243. Is it an absolute necessity?—Not, of course, in exceptional and extreme cases—when firing seawards, for instance; but under ordinary circumstances you want that amount of land behind your target.

244. *Mr. Baker.*] Can you give any opinion as to the value of the range for teaching recruits or young Volunteers?—I think the range, if firing is rendered safe, a very good range for that; and it is close to the town, and easily got at. I have not been told or asked to see any other ranges in the neighbourhood. I think it is valuable for the reasons I have stated. With regard to the necessity for the precautions I mentioned, it, of course, applies more to a thickly-populated country like England than to one like New Zealand. Without them, the fact remains that an owner within certain limits outside or behind you can make himself your master.

245. The proximity to town gives a great value to the range as a practising-ground?—Very great, provided no better can be got.

246. *Mr. Kirk.*] Were Section 5 acquired and the road stopped the range would be practically safe?—I imagine the range would be fairly safe; as safe as it is at the present moment.

247. *The Chairman.*] That would not alter what you say in regard to any one occupying behind?—The hill is high behind in that case. It is not a range you would have if you could get another one better. You cannot always have what you want.

248. *Mr. Baker.*] The range has always been looked upon as valuable by being in close proximity to the town; Volunteers can get to it so easily?—If you want to keep the range you will have to buy Block V.

249. *Mr. Macdonald.*] And how about Block IV.?—That does not so much matter. I do not look upon it as of any value.

250. *Mr. Baker.*] The road might be safely opened up to that point—the southern boundary of Block IV.?—Provided you fire up the gully.

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251. *The Chairman.*] You are the valuer under the land- and income-tax for the City of Wellington?—Yes.

252. Do you know the land that has recently been purchased for the use of the range?—Yes.

253. Has the land that has been lately purchased for the Government been pointed out to you?—Yes.

254. Do you know enough of it to tell the Commissioners what is about its value?—Yes; I have been all over it. I take it roughly to average about £50 an acre—that is, Blocks 1, 2, 6, and 3.

255. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Was it you that Colonel Fox referred to when he said he had met a party on the land with a plan?—Yes.

256. *Mr. Baker.*] Did you value the land on the other side?—No. The boundary-fence of the late Native land goes along the gully.

257. *Mr. Macdonald.*] It is exempt from taxation—that is, the Town Belt?—Yes; it is called the Plantation Reserve. It is planted with firs now.

258. Is £50 per acre the price at which you valued the Native reserve at for land- and income-tax?—Yes.

259. *The Chairman.*] Are you in a position to tell us what is about the value of Sections 4 and 5?—That Section 4 [referring to plan] is somewhat better than 5, as there is a very great amount of broken land here [referring to a portion of Section 5 on the plan].

260. *Mr. Baker.*] Taking everything into consideration for a building-site, I do not think No. 5 is of much value. To obtain value practically means making this road?—Of course, portions of it are of some value; those sites I talk of.

261. Of course, any piece of it as a building-site would be worth a great deal more?—Yes.

262. *Mr. Macdonald.*] As to Section 4, that is better—there are some good building-sites on Section 4?—Yes; good sites here and there. I reckon this at about £75 an acre in some parts; but then you have to consider again that road—the question of access.