

that grass-seed and had it sown and so went on. Well, then, this point about the management. Of course there was a manager appointed who had made an exhaustive estimate and report in conjunction with the late deceased Mr. McHardie, and in which his estimate for the necessary improvements was £38,000. That was on the 14th August, 1886. Here is a document signed Oliver R. Lyons and A. McHardie, but some of it is missing (Exhibit B). This document is only my own copy, you know. The time to be occupied in extending this was to be eight years. The working-expenses and rent were to be £6,500 a year, including rates and taxes. The net income was to be £9,745. Now I had made those improvements at an outlay of about £12,000. The net income was about £9,000 and it was done in four years. The last clip before the sale was at the rate of about £13 5s. per half-bale. It took the first prize, silver medal, at the great Melbourne Wool Exhibition, for the most value for unskirted crossbred wool per fleece by the bale of not less than 3 cwt. I only mention this to show the principle the bank was going on. The gentleman who wanted £38,000 to improve with and eight years to do it in of course superseded me in the management, and I had done it for £12,000 in four years with the same result and income. The land bought from Natives had all been arranged for by myself and probably cost 10s. to 15s. per acre. Of course I had a standing arrangement with them that when they wanted to sell they should let me know, and the thing was all cut and dried. I mentioned in an early stage of this inquiry that I had this arrangement with the Natives: to buy as soon as they felt disposed to sell without my asking them, and I had gone into this so far in detail that I knew the Natives that were going to sell, and they had offered to me what they afterwards sold to the bank—in fact, they had offered to me before the thing had gone through the Court for subdivision.

14. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] It cost you 10s. per acre you say. The land you bought?—No, no; I have some writing still from Natives offering me the land. You remember the case when the Natives settled their own claims in Dannevirke. Before that I got offers from them to sell their shares. I am speaking of the land that has been bought since—that I had under offer. What I say here is that the land bought from Natives had all been arranged by myself, and probably cost the bank 10s. per acre.

15. That is since you left?—Yes, since I left. I may mention here that I have held power of attorney from these Natives for many years, as far back as I am speaking of, but I have had this understanding with them (not to ask them to sell to me) and still do so for the remainder (those who have not sold). This land was, I understand, sold to the Government for about £4 10s. an acre. For the first fifteen years of my occupation I drew £100 a year for self. Have not had ordinary wages all the time, and no interest on the money. With regard to the statement in the petition that the bank had made improvements and bought land out of income: The statement of account shown at sale shows about £3,000 surplus after paying interest at 8 per cent., and working-expenses. If after I left the management the account had been worked on the same lines at 5 per cent., there should have been an annual surplus of £5,000, or £50,000 in round numbers during the last ten years under new management, and I left nearly 6,000 acres of bush lying on the ground ready to burn. The statement in the petition that I was the means of providing land for the people at own expense: I have here the Government receipt for £12,000 paid for the purchase of the Seventy-mile Bush, a tract of country about forty miles long by ten wide. The Dannevirke title I completed about twelve years ago by buying from the Natives the remaining share in Dannevirke. Well, this means then that I did not, of course, furnish the money to buy the Government land, but I furnished my influence with the Natives, who would not have sold to the Government unless I had advised them to do so, but would have sold to a syndicate. The Natives would have sold to the Government on my advice, and would not have done so unless I had advised them to do so. What I did do was to use my influence with them and select the time to see them about it, and persuade them to sell to the Government, and I did that at my own expense of time and pocket, and simply from public motives. That is all I have to say, sir.

16. *The Chairman.*] Then, what papers are there that you wish to put in?—The first is a letter from the Northern Investment Company (Exhibit C). Then here is the advertisement of sale (Exhibit D); it is the advertisement of the income and returns—terms cash—in a month. The next paper is in support of the income at the time (Exhibit E). This is by Mr. Avill; it is not signed or anything. There was no evidence for any purpose of this kind offered. Mr. Foster knows the writing. It is a statement of the accounts on the station, and on the other side of it is the income; this is at the time or in the year that it was sold. Then here is the list of grass-seeds incurred by myself and paid for, excepting that I paid 25 per cent. of it out of my own pocket (see Exhibit A). Here is a statement of the working-expenses; it really looks as if somebody was succeeding me in the management. Here is an expression of opinion from a man who knew the nature of the sale (Exhibit F). Here is a letter refusing the release (Exhibit G). Here is a statement by the Bank of New Zealand Assets Realisation Board of the values and areas in 1896—that is, without the stock (Exhibit H). Here is a receipt to Messrs. G. D. Hamilton and Grant for £12,000, and signed by S. Locke, Land Purchase Commissioner and Resident Magistrate, Native districts; it is dated 1871 (Exhibit I). Those are all the papers, sir.

17. You have put your statement before us to your satisfaction and as well as you can?—It is nothing more than an outline of the facts.

18. *Mr. O'Meara.*] What did you put into this land when you entered upon it first? What capital had you?—About £4,000.

19. What value did you put upon this 30,750 acres of land? What was your value of it, your interest in it: your interest in this lease when acquired from the Natives? You said the capital-value placed upon it then was £30,000. What value had you in this leasehold?—That is at the time I got the renewal of the lease when I mentioned that. Well, what I had in it then—it would be 1880—would be the interest.