

for improvements effected, but the application was declined by the Land Board. There is no record in this office of the petitioner being informed that improvements were always allowed to tenants on the expiration of their leases. Mr. De Lautour, on the 18th April, 1902, applied to surrender his lease and have the land reoffered for selection weighted with the value of his improvements, but his application was declined by the Government.

The petition is returned herewith, together with the report furnished to you by the Under-Secretary, Native Department.

I have, &c.,

F. T. O'NEILL,

Assistant Under-Secretary.

The Chairman, Native Affairs Committee, Wellington.

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, NAPIER, TO THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LANDS, WELLINGTON, DATED THE 27TH AUGUST, 1914.

*Petition of C. A. de Lautour for Compensation for Value of Improvements.*

IN reply to your letter of the 21st instant forwarding petition received from Mr. C. A. de Lautour, which I return herewith, I have the honour to report that the land referred to was known as Whakangi Blocks 5A and 5B, containing 2,262 acres, and leased by the Native owners to Samuel Bentley and John Murray for a term of twenty-one years as from the 1st April, 1893, at an annual rental of 1s. per acre for the first seven years, 1s. 3d. per acre for the second term of seven years, and 1s. 6d. per acre for the third term of seven years. There is no mention as to compensation for improvements at the expiration of the lease. The lease was transferred on sale by default from the Registrar, Supreme Court, to the Bank of Australasia on the 17th November, 1896, and Mr. Cecil Albert de Lautour took it over on the 21st May, 1898. The Government purchased an area of 1,164 acres 3 roods 1 perch, which was duly gazetted on the 4th August, 1898, page 1254, and the rent commenced as from the 24th October, 1897.

The lease expired on the 31st March, 1914, and the land was offered for selection in two sections, under the optional system, on the 21st April, 1914, as per poster No. 312.

The value of improvements effected by the late lessee, according to the Crown Lands Ranger's report, amount to £3,732 10s., made up as follows:—

Subdivision 3 (about 521 acres),—

	£	s.	d.
Fencing—334 chains (approximate) at £60 per mile .. ..	250	10	0
Felling and grassing—355 acres at £2 10s. per acre .. ..	887	10	0
Felling and grassing and clearing—150 acres at £3 per acre .. ..	450	0	0
Sheep-dip, draining-pens, mixer, and yards .. ..	75	0	0
House (nine rooms), wash-house, and dairy .. ..	350	0	0
Men's whare .. ..	25	0	0
Loose-box .. ..	15	0	0
Orchard .. ..	20	0	0
	<u>£2,073</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Subdivision 4 (about 661 acres),—

Fencing—236 chains (approximate) at £60 per mile .. ..	177	0	0
Felling and grassing—563 acres at £2 10s. per acre .. ..	1,407	10	0
Felling and grassing and clearing—25 acres at £3 per acre .. ..	75	0	0
	<u>£1,659</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>

The only improvements paid for in cash when the sections were offered for selection were—nine-roomed house, wash-house, dairy, and men's whare and outbuildings, to the total value of £390. The balance of improvements is included in the capital value, and the present lessees are paying rent on same.

Messrs. De Lautour, Barker, and Co., on behalf of the late lessee, made application to the Land Board on the 3rd April last to be allowed compensation for improvements effected, but the Board declined the application.

There is no record in this Department that the petitioner was ever informed that improvements were always allowed to the tenants on expiration of lease. He applied on the 18th April, 1902, to surrender his lease and have the land offered for selection loaded with the valuation of his improvements. The Land Board on the 19th April decided to recommend that the Hon. the Minister of Lands approve the same. The matter was laid before Cabinet, but it was decided to decline the same, as per your letter of the 7th February, 1903 (L. & S. 40477).

W. H. SKINNER,

Commissioner of Crown Lands,