

THURSDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1894.

CHARLES WILLIAM ADAMS sworn and examined.

1. *Dr. Fitchett.*] I understand you are Chief Surveyor of the Otago District?—Yes.
2. How long have you been Chief Surveyor?—About nine years.
3. What knowledge have you of Otago lands—of their values and capabilities?—A very good general knowledge. I have been over a great part of Otago on various occasions.
4. Do you know the Pomahaka Estate?—I do.
5. How often have you been over it?—About six times lately.
6. When were you first brought into connection with the estate for the purpose of the Government purchase?—I am not quite sure whether I was not over the ground before; I have seen it at a distance many times. I do not think, however, I was over the ground until the 26th August, 1893.
7. What led you to go over the ground then?—I had instructions by telegram to visit and inspect the ground.
8. From whom did you receive those instructions?—From the Surveyor-General, on the 21st August, 1893.
9. Have you that telegram with you now?—I have not.
10. Where were you when you got that telegram, and what were you doing?—I believe I got the telegram at Waipahi, on my way to inspect the Conical Hills Estate.
11. It was under offer to the Government?—Yes.
12. Was it for that purpose you went to Conical Hills?—Yes.
13. You then went to Pomahaka, and what did you do there?—I went to Conical Hills first.
14. You went after that to Pomahaka, what did you do there?—We rode out from Clinton on the morning of Saturday, the 26th August, 1893, in company with Mr. Hughan, Ranger, and Mr. John Douglas, and Mr. Turnbull, agent for Mr. Douglas. He went with us to show us the way.
15. Do you know how it was that Mr. Douglas met you there? Had you any communication on the matter before?—No. He sent a message up by Mr. Hughan, the Crown Ranger, to say he was at Clinton, and that he could not stop longer than Saturday, and we hurried over the work at Conical Hills and hurried back to meet him.
16. You all went over the estate?—Yes.
17. For what purpose? How did you proceed?—I may say that the estate is about nine miles long, and on an average two miles wide. We did not ride much further than to the middle of the estate, and took a bird's-eye view of the north portion of it.
18. How long were you on the estate?—We left Clinton a little after 9 o'clock in the morning, and got back to lunch about 2 o'clock.
19. About five hours you were on the estate?—We were not on the estate more than a couple of hours. It would take us an hour and a half going and coming, which would leave us two hours to spend on the ground.
20. For what purpose did you visit Pomahaka, Mr. Adams? What had you in your mind's eye as your mission when you went out?—I was asked to inspect and report on it, with a view to Government purchasing it. It was under offer to them.
21. Was it for the purpose of forming an accurate estimate of the value, or for forming an opinion as to whether it was fit for settlement?—Generally to see if it was fit for settlement; and to give an estimate of the value as well.
22. You would not require to make a very exhaustive examination for that?—No.
23. Your opinion as to the value would simply be an approximate one?—Yes.
24. You furnished a report?—Yes; I have it here.
25. That expressed your honest opinion as the result of your investigations?—It did.
26. Was Mr. Douglas with you all the time?—Yes, he was with us all the time.
27. Did he influence you in any way, to your knowledge?—I do not think so. He pointed out the advantages of the estate.
28. Its aspect probably?—Yes.
29. Having sent in your report, what further connection had you in the matter?—None at all, except to subdivide the estate.
30. You had nothing to do with the purchase?—No.
31. Did you see Mr. Douglas on the subject before the purchase?—I do not think so.
32. Nor since?—No; except he came in once and asked if we had made our report. We gave him no information.
33. Did the Minister see you about your valuation?—No; neither before nor since.
34. *Mr. Scobie Mackenzie.*] You made a report on this estate, Mr. Adams?—Yes; I have it here.
35. I think that you said you did not pretend to make anything in the nature of a valuation on this visit?—That is borne out in the report if you will permit me to read a paragraph as follows:—“As Mr. Hughan and I had only one day in which to make a hurried inspection of this block, our estimate of the value must only be taken as approximate, and I do not suppose the land will be bought on our valuation, as I see that clause 3 of the Act provides for a Land Purchase Board.”
36. Any opinion you expressed then did not pretend to be accurate or exhaustive, but you relied upon the Land Purchase Commission to fix the price?—Yes.
37. Mr. Douglas was with you all the time you were going over the estate. Did he make any reference to the value of the estate?—Oh, yes; I had a letter from him.
38. But in the course of conversation?—Yes; he said he had sold several sections a few years before at an average of nearly £4 per acre.
39. Was that the expression he made use of, “£4 per acre”?—No; I think he said £3 15s. or £3 17s.