

1437. You do not say there are not large areas both of agricultural and pastoral land which can be profitably settled?—If it was cleared.

1438. Assuming there is a means of getting your timber to the market, you do not see any difficulty in the way of its being cleared within, say, the next ten years?—There would be the question of competition with forests nearer the port.

1439. We are told the prices are increasing, and we are told, and apparently quite reasonably, that with a slight increase in price you could bring timber from a further distance and still find a market for it: if that continues do you see any insuperable difficulty in the way of getting the whole of this land cleared?—If you assume that the whole of the country would be taken up by mills and the timber cut, and the land was sown in grass, of course there is no doubt it would be. When I replied before I was judging from the past. If we assume that the land will be taken up and the timber cut and the land sown in grass, we must assume that there will be great progress.

1440. We are told that applications are being made for land?—I do not know the number. The only ones I do know of are those already settled.

1441. Do you not think the Midland Railway reservations have done something to retard settlement?—Yes.

1442. If those reserves have retarded settlement in the past, are you entitled to take the past as a proper guide to the future settlement, seeing that the reservations have now disappeared?—I can only say again, as I said before, that I cannot give an idea until I know what applications have been sent in.

1443. We have been told that since the reservations have been removed a number of applications have been sent in?—I do not know what the applications are; they go to Nelson.

#### THURSDAY, 14TH MARCH, 1901.

JOHN AINSLIE MONTGOMERIE further examined on oath.

1444. *Mr. Bell.*] Referring again to Mr. Dalston's return of the 8th February, have you now valued the Ahaura sections?—Yes.

1445. And this is your valuation?—Yes.

Sections.	Area.			Value.	Sections.	Area.			Value.
	A.	R.	P.	£ s. d.		A.	R.	P.	£ s. d.
11	0	0	12	4 0 0	253	0	0	12	4 0 0
57	0	0	12	4 0 0	254	0	0	12	4 0 0
87	0	0	12	5 10 0	255	0	0	12	5 10 0
90-93	0	1	8	17 10 0	257	0	0	12	4 0 0
103-106	0	1	8	17 10 0	258	0	0	12	5 10 0
108	0	0	12	4 0 0	264	0	1	27	17 15 0
113-121	0	2	28	40 10 0	265	0	1	4	12 0 0
128-144	1	1	4	75 10 0	266	0	0	30	8 10 0
168-179	0	3	24	54 0 0	267	0	0	30	8 10 0
182-220	2	3	28	172 10 0	268	0	0	33	9 5 0
225	0	0	12	4 0 0	269	0	0	12	4 0 0
227	0	0	12	4 0 0	270	0	0	12	4 0 0
229-235	0	2	4	32 10 0	271	0	0	12	5 10 0
237	0	0	11	3 15 0	272	0	0	10	4 15 0
238	0	0	9	3 5 0	273	0	0	10	3 10 0
239	0	0	11	3 15 0	274	0	0	10	3 10 0
240	0	0	7	3 12 6	275	0	0	10	3 10 0
241	0	0	10	4 15 0	276	0	0	10	3 10 0
242	0	0	10	3 10 0	277	0	0	10	4 15 0
243	0	0	10	3 10 0	278-287	0	3	0	43 0 0
244	0	0	10	3 10 0	288	0	0	10	4 15 0
245	0	0	10	3 10 0	289	0	0	10	3 10 0
246	0	0	10	4 15 0	290	0	0	10	3 10 0
247	0	0	12	4 0 0	291	0	0	10	3 10 0
248	0	0	12	4 0 0	292	0	0	10	3 10 0
249	0	0	12	4 0 0	293	0	0	10	4 15 0
250	0	0	12	4 0 0	294-303	0	3	0	43 0 0
251	0	0	12	5 10 0					
252	0	0	12	4 0 0		12	2	6	734 7 6

In the value of these sections I have added £1 as a business-license fee, but I consider that in arriving at the value this should be deducted. My estimate is therefore £734 7s. 6d. *minus* £159 (159 sections); total, £575 7s. 6d.

1446. Now, you have also taken out the areas of Crown lands in the Nelson Provincial District given by the Crown for the railway, and upon which the railway is constructed?—Yes.

1447. And this is your estimate [Exhibit No. 30]?—Yes.

1448. *Dr. Findlay.*] You have valued the total Ahaura sections at how much?—£575 7s. 6d.

1449. First of all, you add £1 as a business license?—Yes; when the Government had the land you had to take out a business license before you could purchase.