

felt that he could not do otherwise, and he hoped that the public would help him in any difficulty he might get into. The response came in a rousing cheer from all present. The assemblage then dispersed. A requisition to hold a public meeting on the matter is being largely signed."

9. Under whose authority was it put into the hands of the auctioneer?—Mine.

10. To sell?—Yes.

11. And he refused to take any competitive bid?—Yes, he refused—he would not accept a bid. I afterwards demanded from him the amount of the expenses that the office had been put to, and was about to sue him for the costs and expenses, amounting to £26, when he paid them. Of course, he could not avoid paying, because he had broken his contract with the office.

12. Are you in a position to explain whether, if the auctioneer had gone on and accepted competitive bids, there would have been any injustice to anybody?—We did not see any injustice. A lot was made of the fact of Mrs. McDonnell being a widow; but she had agreed to accept £200 as the price of the improvements, and she would have got that. She pulled down and rebuilt immediately afterwards. That £200 would have gone into her pocket, but she would have lost the goodwill of the lease.

13. She had the right to bid?—Yes, of course, the same as the Government Insurance; but if they had bid she would have had to pay considerably more than she is paying now.

14. In 1870 there was paid out of the net rentals the sum of £1,746 19s. 2d.?—That is from 1875 back.

15. As contributions towards the rates?—Yes. At that time Native reserves were not rated. It was considered wrong that they should not pay rates, and it was on Mr. Mackay's report that they should contribute on that basis.

16. Including that amount in 1876, you say, for ten years fully 20 per cent. of the income collected was contributed?—Yes.

17. Does that 20 per cent. include the amount already mentioned?—Yes, that is the total.

18. At any rate, for ten years the income contributed fully 20 per cent. to the local rating—going to the local body?—Yes.

19. You say that the tenants own absolutely all improvements?—Every farthing's worth. In regard to the contributions, the Appendices to the Journals, 1879, G.-3A, p. 279, say, "In the year 1870 the Government sanctioned an expenditure out of the Greymouth Native Reserve funds at the rate of 10 per cent. on the net rental collected on the Native Reserve within the Borough of Greymouth in aid of rates, such contribution to be expended in the improvement of the streets within the Reserve, the understanding being that the aid so afforded was merely to be considered as a concession, and was to cease in course of time. In accordance with this arrangement an annual subsidy was paid the Borough Council for five years, the amount expended in that manner being £1,746 19s. 2d. Independent of the above-named sum, additional moneys have been also contributed at various times since the occupation of the estate for the improvement of the property. The total amount expended in that way during the first ten years—namely, to 1st July, 1875—represents an annual contribution at the rate of 20 per cent. on the income collected within the borough."

20. In reply to the question in regard to the improvements, Mr. Campbell, I think, said they belonged to the owner after a certain term?—No; Mr. Campbell was hazy about that. I do not think he has really grasped the change which has been brought about by section 14. He thought any one outbidding him in rent would have to give compensation for improvements.

21. I want you to explain the position?—I have explained that in the report. Mr. Campbell referred to anybody having to compensate him if they took over a lease, and I think his impression as to the old order of things still prevails.

22. Under the existing order of things you say that the tenants own absolutely all improvements?—Absolutely. The only relationship we have with them is to adjust the rent every twenty-one years.

23. In regard to subdivisive surveys, where the tenants cut up and subdivide their allotments in order to sublet, you hold to the principle that it is not fair to make that chargeable to the ownership of the land?—No, certainly not. I have stated that I thought it well understood that was one of the grievances of Mr. Coates and also of the petitioners, that we were not in the position of the freeholder—we had to dedicate streets. Some of the streets that the tenants have dedicated are shown on the plan. They do it for their own benefit, so that they could get an increased rent.

24. There are streets which the tenants have already dedicated?—Yes, narrow streets.

25. What power had they to dedicate?—They had no power to dedicate them, but they can arrange with the borough to take them over. There is one in which the District Land Registrar refused to certify.

26. The process by which they get these streets dedicated is by conference with the borough, and they take under the Public Works Act?—The borough approves of the dedication, and the same with right-of-ways. We will not consent to any subdivision or any right-of-way unless the borough approves.

27. When the borough approves of such dedication, and the land is taken under the Public Works Act, is compensation paid?—Yes. I do not know that we have had any dedication of late years. The Reserve has been subdivided for years and years, and I do not know of any dedication of streets recently.

28. Would there not be an obligation on your part, as trustee of these lands, to claim compensation?—Yes, we would claim compensation, and we have claimed it for the tidal creek marked on the plan. That has been taken for a park for the town, comprising 8 acres, and it is a benefit to both sides.

29. Was the road there (Threadneedle Street) dedicated by the tenants?—Well, I could not say—it was too long ago—it was not in my time. It is less than 66 ft. wide, and the subdivision