

50. If an investor came to you who had been applied to for a loan on one of these properties would you give the same value as you have given to the Committee here?—Exactly the same. The book containing the valuations will probably avail me for the next twelve months. If in six months' time a person came to me for a valuation for a loan I should rely upon this valuation; if in twelve months' time I should require to go up again.

51. You have already stated to the Committee that in your opinion there will be a rise in value?—I think there will.

52. But, in reply to a previous question, you stated that it was possible there might be a boom. How would that affect the values?—If there was a boom this district would participate in it. People get excited and they think, "If So-and-so will give £100 an acre for this land it is good enough for me."

53. On the whole you consider the values as supplied by the Government valuer are reasonable under the circumstances?—I firmly believe that it is a fair and reasonable valuation.

54. Do you remember when this land was settled?—Only about seven years ago, I think.

55. Do you remember the price that was paid for it at that time?—I think that some of that land at that time was sold at about £10 an acre.

56. Then in seven years it has appreciated in value to the extent of from four to six times its former value?—I think in some cases it has.

57. Would you consider that appreciation might be expected to go on at the same rate?—No, I do not think that at all. I have said that I think there will be steady progress, but I do not think there will be anything to warrant one going and speculating there. If a man offered me any of this land at these prices, and I wanted to go and settle there, I would not hesitate to give them. But I would not give those prices for the purpose of doubling my money, say, in the next seven or eight years.

58. In other words, you would expect an appreciation in values to go on?—Yes. I think that as men settle there and as industries increase these properties will be improved. There will be greater inducement to settle there. I think that buses may go out that way, and it will improve, and I think the workmen's trains will be much more appreciated than they are now.

59. Would there be any opportunity for the present holders to subdivide their sections into small areas?—I do not think so.

60. Not within a reasonable period?—I do not think that within a reasonable period there will be any inducement for men to go there on smaller areas than the present holders have now.

61. It is not at all likely that sections will be cut up for closer settlement?—I do not think so. In that case, where they sold a 39-acre block, that, of course, will be cut up. That is the homestead.

62. Is there any reasonable expectation of being able to cut that up within, say, the next twenty-three years?—Oh, yes, certainly. The people who hold it will cut it up in October, they state, and they will offer such terms—perhaps £10 deposit—as will induce people to give really more than the land is worth. That is how people get these big prices.

63. But, after all, that is the market value?—In a sense it is; in another sense it is not.

64. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Do you know the homestead block?—Yes.

65. You know that it has been sold within the last week or two?—Yes, it has been sold to speculators.

66. My information is to the effect that it was sold, and was resold at a lower price than that which the man paid to the Government only a few weeks ago?—I do not know what he paid the Government. He sold it for £1,976. That includes the improvements.

67. You are not aware, I suppose, that it was sold for nearly £200 less than the Government valuation?—Yes; the Government valuation, I understand, was about £2,150.

68. You mentioned the possibility of buses running to Hetana. Are there no buses running just now?—I am not aware of any.

69. You are a pretty old resident of Auckland, I believe?—Yes, over fifty years—nearly fifty-one years.

70. You can, I suppose, remember different townships in the Auckland District many years ago being put up to auction and realizing big prices?—Yes.

71. Such as Drury and Pokeno?—Yes, and South Avondale.

72. Is the land in such places as Drury and Pokeno, on the main line of railway, of more value now—I am speaking of town sections—than it was forty years ago?—I question if it is.

73. *Mr. Forbes.*] Has the right of purchasing the freehold, given by the legislation of last session, made these sections more marketable?—Yes.

74. They would bring better prices on that account?—Yes.

75. *The Chairman.*] Did I understand you to say that you expect this land will double in value before the end of the lease?—Yes.

76. Is not that purely guesswork on your part?—It is only an opinion.

77. Have you in your experience seen similar townships go down in value in a period of ten or fifteen years?—I cannot recall a stagnated township.

78. Take those mentioned by Mr. Massey?—Drury is a stagnated township, yes, and Pokeno.

79. All anticipation of land going up or down is purely a matter of speculation?—Purely speculation.

80. *Mr. Witty.*] You stated that one or two townships, such as Drury and Pokeno, had not risen in value: are there not many cases where townships have appreciated very materially?—Certainly.

81. Far more than those that have gone down?—Yes.