

25. The gist of what you ask is that a fresh valuation should be made on the ground that the local body's valuer had been employed at a fee by the local body to go round with the Government valuer and he also acted as assessor?—That is so.

26. *Mr. Flanagan* (Valuer-General). Do you hold the Valuation Department responsible for the appointment of the local body's assessor?—If it was within their knowledge, certainly. If the Valuation Department were aware of it they were responsible, and the more responsible because they should be a protection to the public.

27. Do you still hold the same opinion when I tell you that the Valuation Department has no cognisance of the local body's nominees?—The local head of the Department was present in the Court when I objected on those grounds, and there can be no excuse on the ground of ignorance.

28. Did you submit the objection you have raised here to the Assessment Court?—Yes.

29. What was the decision of the Court?—My objection was overruled.

30. With regard to the fixing of values, you said that the valuer for the district made certain representations to you when you made an objection to him that your values were too high. What am I to understand that the valuer suggested?—Just simply what I said.

31. Was it that he proposed a compromise?—No.

32. What was it then?—The statement was that he would get a friend to take the property over.

33. Who made that?—Mr. F. F. Mackenzie.

34. Did you repeat that statement in the Assessment Court?—No.

35. What date was that: while the valuation was being conducted, or between the time of the notices being sent out and the Court sitting?—Between the time of the notices being sent out and the Court sitting. The second valuation had not been made then.

36. I want you to be very careful about this, because if such a statement was made by a valuer he renders himself liable to dismissal?—I think it would be for the good of the public if that were so.

37. I am not asking your opinion on that. Did you repeat to the Assessment Court what you have to-day told the Commissioners?—I did.

38. Quite as fully?—Quite clearly.

39. And the decision of the Court was unanimously against you?—No, I do not think it was unanimous. It was put as the ruling of the President.

40. Was the Court divided in its verdict?—In what matter?

41. As to whether the statements you made were worthy of credence or not?—There was no notice taken of it.

42. The Court unanimously decided, after hearing your evidence, to sustain the valuation?—Yes; the whole of the valuations were sustained.

43. The Court gave you a very patient hearing?—A very curt hearing.

44. You made certain statements during the hearing for which you were called to order—statements with regard to the conduct of Mr. Mackenzie?—I stated he had used slanderous statements with regard to the title of my property.

45. And that matter was discussed in Court?—Not discussed in Court.

46. Referred to in Court?—No, it was the President. The assessors sat there as dummies.

47. The position is that statements were made in the Court, and the Court unanimously decided that the valuations of the Department were fair. You had a difference with the valuer with regard to the valuation of your property. Is it not a fact that you were of opinion that your property should have been valued on an agricultural basis?—I did not discuss the matter with him.

48. I think it comes to that?—I cannot help your opinion. I am speaking the truth.

49. You surely know the arguments you used as to why the valuations were too high?—You are suggesting something that never happened.

50. In your discussion with the valuer, did you not maintain that your value was too high?—I referred him to the previous valuation. I told him there was no room for discussion, and he will tell you so if he speaks the truth.

51. But did you not discuss the matter with the valuer?—There was no room for discussion.

*The Valuer-General*: The witness does not desire to answer questions; I will not question further.

52. *The Chairman* (to witness).] The Valuer-General asked you about the suggestion that the Government would take over your property. The Valuer-General asked you when that statement was made by Mr. Mackenzie to you, and I understood your answer to be that it was between the time you received your notice of valuation and the sitting of the Court?—No, it was before the time of the valuation. It was just before he made this reduction—when he took it off one and put it on to the other. It was on the occasion of his visit that he made that statement.

53. How long was it before the sitting of the Court. A matter of months or weeks?—Within a month, perhaps within a fortnight. I could not say without referring to the paper. This man Ewington was present at the time.

54. *Mr. Campbell*.] Was Ewington within hearing?—I should think so. If he has ordinary hearing, I certainly think he would be.

55. *Mr. Rutherford*.] Was Mr. Ewington with Mr. Mackenzie when Mr. Mackenzie made the offer about the Government taking up the land for workmen's homes?—No, that was on another occasion; but when he made the statement that the property did not belong to me, Ewington was by.

56. *Mr. Campbell*.] But no one was present when he said that if you did not like the valuation the Government would take it over?—No.

57. *The Chairman*.] That was the time I was asking you about. Was that statement about the Government taking over the land made between the time you received your valuation and the time of the sitting of the Court?—That was on the occasion of his first visit. He came to the district three or four times.