

94. They are not the first direct means taken of expressing dissatisfaction. Were any ratepayers' meetings called?—Yes.

95. Before the rating-on-unimproved-value system was brought into operation was a meeting called to express dissatisfaction?—I do not know of any.

96. Do you not think, taking a reasonable view of the matter, that the number of objections received to a revision is an index of the dissatisfaction or otherwise of the revaluation?—I think so.

97. Do you know how many assessments there were in the Borough of Otahuhu?—No.

98. You do not know that there were 930?—No.

99. Do you know how many objections there were lodged out of that 930?—No.

100. There were eighty-eight, which represents 10 per cent. of the total assessments. Nor, I suppose, do you know that out of that eighty-eight, fifty-three were settled by mutual agreement, leaving only thirty-five to be settled by the Court?—Probably that is so.

101. There could not have been much dissatisfaction, knowing that they had the Assessment Court to take their objections to, and they did not do so?—A great many people are frightened to go to the Assessment Court.

102. Have you any knowledge of the practice of the landowner who puts a greater value on his land for loan purposes than for taxation purposes?—It sounds very much like human nature.

103. Yes, but have you any knowledge of such a case?—No.

104. *Mr. McVeagh.*] When did you observe the demand for land begin to fall off here?—I think within the last twelve months it has been slackening very considerably. About twelve months ago it began to fall off.

105. *The Chairman.*] Can you suggest any reason for the falling-off about twelve months ago?—The principal reason I can give is the supply of money from the Government and other sources for building purposes.

106. How did it operate?—In a difficulty in getting loans. If people see a fair prospect of being able to borrow money at a reasonable rate, instead of paying rent, they are inclined to go out a distance.

107. In regard to the definition of "unimproved value" in the Act, I understood you to say that you would take into consideration the prospect of realizing in a reasonable time. Is that your idea of how land should be valued?—Yes.

108. You would not go merely by the use to which the land is put at the time of the valuation?—Not in towns.

109. But you would have consideration for the fact that the land might, in a reasonable time, be used for better purposes?—That is the land valuer's view, and I think it is a reasonable one.

ROBERT MCCALLUM examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a land agent, carrying on business in Otahuhu, where I have been for three years.

2. *Mr. McVeagh.*] I think you have some knowledge of the dissatisfaction in regard to the recent valuations made by the Government Valuation Department?—Yes.

3. Is it widespread?—It is general.

4. You made a valuation of these properties to which Mr. Lloyd has referred, and you have heard Mr. Lloyd's evidence; do you endorse it, or do you wish to qualify it, or add to it?—There is nothing I could add to Mr. Lloyd's statement regarding these properties. We went round together, and I agree with what Mr. Lloyd said.

5. In making these valuations, did you proceed upon the principle of determining what would be a fair price for the seller to ask on reasonable terms?—Yes.

6. You heard, I suppose, a suggestion made that there was property used for growing potatoes, and that to value it upon that basis would not be fair; do you coincide with that?—Yes.

7. How would you proceed in that case to ascertain the value?—The property is situated almost in the heart of the town. No sales have taken place near it, so we could not judge by that. Considering all things, I consider £450 per acre a very fair price.

8. Have you observed whether the demand for property in Otahuhu has fluctuated at all?—There has been practically no business done in the last twelve months in Otahuhu Borough lands.

9. *Mr. Campbell.*] Has the war affected the demand for property here?—I do not think so.

10. How long is it since you and Mr. Lloyd made your valuation?—It was only yesterday.

11. *The Valuer-General.*] Seeing that no sales have taken place, to your knowledge, in the last twelve months, what had you to guide you in your estimates as to how much to discount the value of the land?—Just my experience in Otahuhu.

12. It resolves itself into a matter of opinion?—Yes.

13. You stated that no business had been done in the last twelve months; that is an admission that business was pretty brisk previous to twelve months ago?—It was not. It was better than now, but there is nothing doing now.

14. The petition challenging the Government valuations relates to a period anterior to twelve months ago?—Yes.

15. The valuation to which the petition refers is the valuation taking effect from the 31st March, 1914, which, of course, would be based on transactions previous to that time?—I go back to December, and say there was no activity then. Even before that there was very little.

16. *Mr. McVeagh.*] When did the dissatisfaction commence?—When they knew the valuations on their land.

17. *The Valuer-General.*] If the dissatisfaction commenced directly the valuations were increased, how was it that there were only 10 per cent. of objectors?—Half of the objectors have not come forward. I am bound to say that most of them would come forward and object now, but a great many were frightened to come forward.