

ALBERT JOHN SPEEDY examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am a farmer, residing at Awatea. Mr. Ryder has mentioned my property, the one of 3,200 acres, valued at £6 17s. 6d. per acre. I am situated in the South Riding, and, although I carried 1·18 of stock on the average for several years, I did not fatten any wethers, but sold them as two-tooth stores, and all my cattle I sell as stores. I do not fatten any cows at all, except an occasional one, which the butcher takes. The country is not good enough to fatten. I want to compare my property with the one mentioned as carrying two sheep to the acre and fattening all the spare stock. That property is valued at £6 8s. The facilities for getting the stock away are about the same. The facilities for getting the stock away from the South Riding in the summer-time have not been improved since the previous valuation, whilst in the West Riding they have been considerably improved. Mr. Ryder also mentioned Dr. Andrew's property, in the South Riding, about the same size as my own—3,500 acres. The facilities for getting his stuff away are very similar to mine, except that he has a few miles further to go. The creek he has to cross is always negotiable in the summer-time with a wagon. There is no bridge across it, but it is their wish that that is so. I do not see why my property, carrying 1·18 of stock, should be valued at £6 17s. 6d., and this other property, carrying 2·2 of stock, should be valued at only £6 4s. The other property I have compared mine with is the Annedale property, in the West Riding, valued at £6 8s. per acre.

2. *The Valuer-General.*] You are referring to the capital value?—Yes.

3. Do you know if the Annedale property is worked as one property or as three?—As far as I know, it is worked as one.

4. But it is valued as three, is it not?—That is so.

5. In valuing it as three the valuer has to take into consideration each property valued. I understand there is no road access to the back portion of the property?—It may be unformed.

6. Do you know the Annedale unimproved values—for instance, the area of 5,366 acres?—£22,805.

7. And the 6,869 acres?—£30,910.

8. And the 3,445 acres?—£11,627.

9. Have you any fault to find with those values?—We did not come here to find fault with the valuer in any particular thing. We just want an adjustment between our values and the values of the other ridings generally. The unimproved value has jumped up in the case of 6,000-odd acres from £23,000 to £30,000.

10. What percentage of increase is that?—I have not worked it out.

11. You have done it in one riding, why not in this?—We took Annedale as a whole.

12. Have you any fault to find with the value put down for this 6,896 acres?—I have fault to find with the general increase of Annedale as a whole.

13. I am not putting it as a whole. It has been valued as three properties?—If it is wrong as a whole it must be wrong individually.

14. Have you any objection to make to the valuation of this 6,896 acres?—I certainly think it is too low altogether.

15. Why?—My own property, for instance, has jumped up from a capital value of £4 per acre.

16. The petition deals with the unimproved value?—My unimproved value is now higher than the capital value was in the first instance, and if Annedale had been jumped up in the same way both the capital and the unimproved value would be much higher than is shown in the valuation.

17. How is Annedale fenced?—It is well fenced.

18. Is each property fenced?—I cannot say that each property is fenced separately. It is worked as one station.

19. On which portion of the property are the buildings?—I could not say.

20. By what route is the access to Mrs. Hoare's 3,445 acres?—I could not state. I do not know which property belongs to the different individuals.

21. Did you know it was only a pack-track?—I did not.

22. And with regard to Mrs. Reed's 5,366 acres?—I do not know. All I know is that they could have had roads made if they had applied.

23. How far is Mrs. Vernon Reed's property back from the formed road?—I have just said I do not know which is her property, so I do not know how far it is from the road. We are taking Annedale as a whole, as it is worked as a station.

24. It is valued on your roll in three parts: why do you take it as one station?—Because it is worked as one station. I am not a Councillor, you know.

25. Why do you take exception?—Because it is valued too low.

26. It is valued in three portions, and has not the valuer to take into consideration the roading and access to each in fixing the unimproved value?—Yes, I should think so—to the separate properties.

27. If Annedale was cut up, would you not require to take into consideration the roading over the whole of it?—If thrown open for settlement the roads would be formed before it was cut up, I should think.

28. If one property has access to the main road, is it not of more value than a property which is twelve miles off the road?—Yes. Is this the first time the valuation has been made on that basis, or has it been like that for forty years?

29. These properties were on the roll, I presume, in 1907. It has been the habit to value Annedale as three properties?—As you say, the valuer has to take into consideration the fact that there is not good roading, but that has been the case for the last forty years, and yet that property has not been jumped up in the same proportion as the rest of the county.