

Mr. Cornford.

21st Nov., 1879.

862. You are quite sure that it was five shillings she asked for. It was not five pounds, fifty pounds, or a hundred pounds?—Only five shillings.

863. It would not be true that she asked for a large sum of money to be given her?—No; she did not, in my office, hint at a large sum of money. I looked at the demand in the light of a *douceur*.

864. Did she say anything like this—that “If I sign that I shall have to get a large sum of money”?—No.

865. What did you think when she said “five shillings”?—I laughed at the small amount she placed upon her signature, and, if she had signed, I think it would have been more than it was worth.

866. You are quite certain about the five shillings?—I wrote on the document that she would not sign unless she were paid that sum.

867. Mr. Landon.] If there was a girl of about fifteen years of age, or less than that, in your office with her, and Rora told her to go out of the office as soon as the door of the office was opened, do you think you would be likely to remember that circumstance?—Of course I should, but there was nothing of the kind.

868. You say that, a Native dying, the land he was possessed of would revert to his heir?—By a succession order in the Native Land Court it would go to his heir.

869. Does not the Native Land Court make the order in favour of the surviving family?—That may be according to Native custom. I do not know the mode of procedure in the Native Land Court.

870. Is it not a rule that, in nine cases out of ten, the family would be put down as successors, instead of the son only?—Not that I am aware of. I have, in fact, known some cases in the Native Land Court where the father and mother stand out of the certificate in order to have the names of their children put in.

871. Do you understand Maori?—No; I know a word here and there.

872. Whatever question Mr. Sutton would put to Rora, you could not understand?—Except from Mr. Hamlin’s interpretation.

873. There was Mr. Hamlin, Mr. Sutton, yourself, and Rora—four of you—in the office?—Yes.

874. Mr. Rees.] Did you know that Davie was selected executor under the will?—I think the will says that Paora was indebted to Davie; and it was to protect that debt, and give Davie a chance of getting his money, that he was appointed executor.

875. Do you know whether he is executor, or holds a power of attorney for any other Natives?—Not to my knowledge.

876. Sir G. Grey.] Might I put one more question? You say that you do not know Maori?—I do not understand the language.

877. You say you heard her use the words, “*e rima hereni*.” How do you know that that was a demand on her part?—Because she looked, and nodded, and held out her hand.

878. You say that she would not sign without that. How do you know?—By her gestures. I might understand her saying, “*Kahore*,” or intimating her refusal to sign by her manner.

879. I do not see the connection. Supposing five shillings had been offered to her, and she were to say in a disdainful way, “Five shillings”?—No sum was at all offered to her.

880. Colonel Trimble.] You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Rees, that from five pounds up to ten and an hundred pounds were laid upon the table before her. Is there any foundation for that?—Not the slightest. There is not one grain of truth in it.

881. Mr. Rees.] Do you consider it professional to see another solicitor’s client in a case in which you are engaged for the defence?—If the person came voluntarily to me, I should have no objection.

882. Do you consider it professional?—I do not see that there is anything wrong in it.

883. Do you consider it professional? Will you answer my question?—Well, I could not say whether it was or was not.

884. Do you consider it professional—in accordance with the etiquette of the legal profession?—Yes. If I am offered a voluntary advantage, I think it is quite right to take it; but not to decoy, allure, or induce a person to make overtures. In justice to my client, every evidence that is fairly offered to me I should take.

885. Do you consider it in accordance with the etiquette of the profession to allow your client to bring another solicitor’s client into your office, and hold a private conversation in reference to a matter in issue?—If they both come voluntarily, I see no objection.

886. Did you ever hear of such a thing before?—No.

887. Did you ever know a solicitor of any reputation to do it?—I cannot tell you what goes on in other persons’ offices.

888. Will you be kind enough to answer my question? Do you know of any solicitor of reputation who did it?—Yes; I think I do.

889. Will you mention his name?—I would rather be excused. It touches other people’s private affairs.

890. Do you consider it professional to get an ignorant person, as in this case—a person of the Native race—brought into your office, you being the solicitor on the other side, and ask her questions in regard to the matter in issue, without her solicitor’s knowledge?—If you mean, was my conduct professional, I say it was.

891. I ask the question do you consider it professional?—I have answered the question.

892. Do you consider it professional—will you answer my question?—to allow your client to bring an ignorant person, a client of another solicitor, into your office, to ask questions in regard to a matter at issue and in dispute between them, and ask her to sign a document?—I have already answered that question, Mr. Chairman. I consider my conduct quite professional.

893. The Chairman.] I do not think that is quite an answer?—I think that, under all the circumstances, I acted quite professionally. I have already told Mr. Rees that I would not send for anybody to come to my office. She came of her own free will.

894. Mr. Rees.] I want an answer to my question. I have asked Mr. Cornford if he knows of