

Mr. E. T. Bris-  
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Nov. 10, 1877.

107. *Mr. Stevens.*] In what position is the land at the present time?—It has passed through the Native Land Court, but it has not yet been subdivided. In order to get a good title for the Government the two minors' shares would have to be cut off from the block.

108. *The Chairman.*] Does the present state of the law allow trustees of minors to sell and convey land?—Certainly not. It enables them to subdivide, and of course this, the minors' portion of land, is held separate from the transaction.

109. How do you propose to get a separate title?—There are 32,000 acres in the block. I am able to purchase 20,000 acres.

110. You mean that you could get 20,000 acres with a clear title, which would not include any land held under trust?—Yes; that portion would be taken off—namely, 5,000, 6,000, or 7,000 acres.

111. *Mr. Stevens.*] Is it not a fact that you would have to begin your negotiations for the purchase of this land *de novo*?—No; Rahui has consented to acknowledge the moneys that have been paid. I have never been idle on this matter.

112. Is Rahui the principal claimant?—Yes; the great difficulty I experienced arose from the fact that she had a half-caste husband. That difficulty has been got over, and I could purchase the land for the Government at 3s. an acre, that amount covering all expenses.

113. You say the purchase can be concluded for 3s. an acre, including the moneys already paid?—Yes.

114. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*] Seeing that £1,600 has been paid to the representatives of the Natives, you would lose all that?—I should not, because I have gone into the matter, and they are quite willing to acknowledge that portion of the money which has been paid them, and to allow it to be deducted out of the money to come.

115. *Mr. Stevens.*] I understand you to say that this purchase could be completed if the price were increased to 3s. an acre, and that the money already paid would be allowed for. What difference in price would this 3s. an acre amount to?—£1,350 more. The land has very much increased in value since. It is now four years since negotiations were commenced for this land.

116. *Mr. Ormond.*] Referring to your own position, you justify your dealing with these people on the fact that you took up a purchase that was commenced before you had anything to do with it?—I did not inquire much into it. Dr. Pollen's instructions to me were to hurry the matter, and buy the block, because two or three parties had purchased the timber. The Great North Road was being made, and these people were going to charge an exorbitant price for timber for bridges, culverts, &c. I did not inquire much into it, seeing that these Natives had received money from the Government, and had been acknowledged by the Native Office. Therefore I went into the matter fearlessly.

117. With whom did you deal?—With Hori te More and Arama Karaka direct. I never dealt with Mr. Sheehan until the day before the signing of the agreement. The Government, I might add, have scores of blocks in the same position as regards minors. The matter requires legislation, as under the present Act these blocks cannot be dealt with until a short Act is passed empowering the Native Land Court to appoint trustees for minors, and to give such trustees power to dispose of such interests, the proceeds to be placed in trust.