

85. It is quite possible Mr. Sutton was not aware of these negotiations?—All I heard was from the Natives. I had no direct communication except with the Natives. They came to me, as of course they would, from my communications with them, as I have related. I understood from them that Mr. Sutton was with Mr. Bryce. I should think the papers would show that.

86. Had you any idea, while so engaged in endeavouring to settle the question, that possession of the land would be taken in the way it was done? While I was engaged in bringing the Natives to a concession I understood that Government were going to carry out the resolution of the Committee as to concession on both sides. I also understood Government were to get a concession from the Natives—that the Natives were to obey the law by moving off the land, but in the end were to get it back again; that their concession was to be land elsewhere, and that Government were going to settle with Mr. Sutton by a money payment to him. That I have already given in my evidence.

87 *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] Did the Natives never tell you they were informed by Mr. Bryce that sooner or later the law would have to take its course, if a settlement were not made?—No. When they saw me, after the final interview with Mr. Bryce, they told me they looked upon the matter as settled; and that settlement was they were to go off the land to vindicate the law, and that the land was to come back to them, and that in this concession of land they had done all they were to do. They never told me there was to be any other concession. I should like to add to that, that I never knew and never heard otherwise—that there was any foundation for any different circumstances, until Mr. Bryce told me so since I came to Wellington. I had been told that I was under a misconception as to the arrangement between the Government and the Natives, but not actually on this particular point. In other words, I never heard until I came to Wellington what I understand appears upon the notes of Mr. Bryce's evidence—that Mr. Bryce told the Natives that his arrangement with them was conditional upon his arranging with Mr. Sutton. I never heard that till I came to Wellington this session.

88. Was it not natural—would it not be understood that in a case where a settlement would be the result of mutual concession, that all parties must be brought into harmony before anything like a positive settlement could be made?—No. That was not my understanding of the spirit in which the resolution of the Committee was passed. Of course I could not tell what was in the mind of the Government. I only say what my own view of the feeling of the Committee was.

89. You did understand Mr. Sutton dissented from the arrangement within a short time of what passed between the Natives and the Government?—What I understood from Mr. Sutton was, that he declined to accept the terms Government offered. I mean, I look upon it in a different way altogether from the way in which you put the question. My view, I should like to say, was this—in my mind it was this way: That Government had got the opinion of the Committee, after inquiry, and that it rested upon them to carry it out. My idea was that the proper course to take—as I understood they were taking—was to make both parties to concede that which was necessary to give effect to the recommendation of the Committee.

90. What power did you consider Government had to compel Mr. Sutton to consent to come to the agreement that was contemplated by the Committee?—The course that I think should have been taken was to have left the matter in the state it then was; and then, if power was wanted—as I supposed would be—to come to Parliament, and have asked Parliament to pass a Bill to give effect to the decision of the Committee, and I should have stayed the action of the law until that was done. There was one point I think I omitted in giving my evidence, and that was one the Natives had made constant inquiries of me about. It was this: They wanted me to explain to them how it was the matter appeared to be taken out of Mr. Bryce's hands, as Native Minister, and to go into the hands of Mr. Hall as Premier? I could not give them any explanation of that.

91. *The Chairman.*] Did you see Mr. Sutton during these negotiations—I mean upon this subject?—I do not think I had any communication with him upon this subject. I had some time after. I think just before Parliament met I had one or more communications in writing from Mr. Sutton, expressing dissatisfaction with the course Government were taking; but I had no occasion to meddle in it, and I did not take any notice of it.

92. *Mr. Sutton.*] Upon what evidence before the Committee on the last occasion this petition was here did the Committee find the Natives had a substantial grievance?—I cannot answer, of course, for the Committee; but my own opinion was founded upon my belief that the going of this land to Mr. Sutton was a pure matter of accident, and that the Natives never sold it.

93. Have you seen the documents in reference to this matter—public documents, in possession of the Government?—I take it I had seen all the documents in the hands of the Government up to the time of the decision of the Committee to which I referred.

94. Is there anything at all in those documents to lead one to believe that my claim is not only a legal one, but also an equitable one?—I cannot speak now on my knowledge of the documents, but I simply express my opinion, from my knowledge of the case, that this is really the position of it.

95. Then, I presume that is a private impression—not an impression gained by any evidence, or any documents?—I should say I think that is the general impression in Hawke's Bay. If you had the people here, all would say that was the general impression, or almost so.

96. Then it was, as a matter of fact, altogether baseless so far as anything in the documents went, or anything official at all?—I will not say that at all. I have known the history of this thing from the very beginning.

97. Individually, or through other sources?—Through all the information upon the matter.

98. Could you explain to the Committee why you thought it a proper thing I should make any concession at all?—I have already said, in giving my opinion, that it was a matter of accident that that particular piece of the block came into your hands.

99. Is that supported by evidence?—It is supported by my opinion and all the facts that came before me.

100. Is it not a fact that that point was tried in the Supreme Court and decided by a jury?—Yes, I believe it was. My recollection of the Supreme Court, I should like to add, is—I am only speaking from memory now—that a number of involved issues were submitted. I read the evidence, and I came to a different conclusion from the jury upon it.