

138. If I understand it right, at the first meeting on the 5th March the principle I have just spoken of was laid down by Mr Bryce?—That was a suggestion that they should give a piece of land.

139. On the 5th March the suggestion was made by Mr. Bryce, as shown in his evidence, that Mr. Sutton, the Natives, and the Government were all to give something towards a settlement?—Yes; Mr. Bryce did say that. So far so I was concerned this was unauthorized.

140. That was on the first occasion?—Yes.

141. And, if I understand your answer right, upon the first occasion when that offer was made you said nothing?—I said nothing. Mr. Bryce did not address himself to me at all. He did not ask any opinion from me.

142. Then you were present again on the 8th March, at the adjourned meeting?—Yes.

143. At that meeting it was that the Natives offered 1,000 acres as their contribution to the settlement?—Yes.

144. You were present then?—Yes, I was present.

145. Then between the two dates—the 5th and the 8th March—did you repudiate the proposed mode of settlement?—The Government never asked my opinion at all, and never spoke to me about it. I only saw the Ministers when with the Natives.

146. I want a clear understanding as to what occurred between the 5th and the 8th March. On the 5th the principle was laid down in your presence, and on the 8th the principle was again laid down. The Natives on their part agreed to give 1,000 acres of land. I want to know if, from the time the principle was first laid down on the 5th in your presence, until the 8th, did you say or do anything to lead Mr. Bryce or Mr. Rolleston to believe you would reject their overtures?—I certainly did nothing to lead them to believe I would accept anything.

147. Did you take any action at all to give your state of mind to them?—I do not see that I could. They were not available. They were away from town on other business between the dates, all the while. The days between the meetings were Saturday and Sunday. The first meeting was on Friday, and the second on Monday. I wrote this letter, which conveys my impression pretty clearly, on the 9th March. “The arrangements proposed yesterday do not meet my ideas in any way. Had I been at all aware that a settlement of that kind was contemplated, I should have at once stated my objection. I was not aware till yesterday afternoon what the proposal was. Up to that time I had been led to believe that the Natives would provide land of equal value, which they would sell to the Government, receiving funds wherewith to pay me. I could name at once half a dozen arrangements of that kind much more suitable than this Kahurangi business. My first impression yesterday was quite against a settlement upon the terms proposed, and further consideration assures me that, while the question of amount is an important one, it is nothing as compared with the principle, which I consider is highly objectionable. I want it settled, but I want it settled in such a way as will be fair to myself both privately and publicly; and, in the interests of the Government as well as my own, I feel bound to say a better settlement will have to be made.”

148. That was written on the 9th March?—Exactly; and delivered early in the morning.

149. But between the 5th and the 8th March nothing of this kind was said by you?—I did not see the Ministers at all between the meetings. I saw them on the days of the meetings. As far as my recollection goes, Mr. Harding was waiting for an appointment with Mr. Bryce after the first meeting on Friday, and he was engaged with Mr. Harding all the remainder of that day and all Saturday.

150. You say you proposed to take Wharerangi at a valuation, and to give up Omaranui?—Yes. I proposed to buy Wharerangi and sell Omaranui, and give the difference in price on a valuation.

151. You heard what Mr. Ormond said about the Natives with regard to that,—that they stated distinctly to him they had never authorized you to tell the Government they were willing to sell Wharerangi?—I do not know that they did. They asked me to suggest any piece of land which would be suitable for exchange. I told them, situated as Wharerangi was, I could not say what the purchase-money would be—that it was a very intricate calculation, but that it was certain, if it came to a bargain, they would have several thousand pounds to receive.

152. Did you know that the owners of Wharerangi, from the beginning, refused to negotiate upon that basis?—No; I am not certain they did not: quite the contrary. I had Tareha's positive authority that Wharerangi would be exchanged. There were the same owners interested as in Omaranui; in three cases they were exactly the same, and in the other there was a near relation.

153. Did you know Paora Torotoro was connected with Wharerangi?—Yes; he was connected with both.

154. Did he not object to the selling of Wharerangi?—Tareha said he did not. I have heard that he did at first, but that his objection was withdrawn.

155. Has not Paora Torotoro, as a matter of fact, objected from the very beginning to Wharerangi being alienated?—I really cannot say. I have not had two conversations with Paora.

156. But he was deeply interested in it?—Yes; he was deeply interested. But I had all conversations in reference to it with Tareha. Paora was here (in Wellington), and I think he made an objection to it. I may say I never wanted Wharerangi at all. I only suggested, if they particularly wanted to keep Omaranui, this was a probable thing upon which a fair bargain could be made.

157. Of the four grantees of Wharerangi, did ever any more than this one—that is, Mōhaia—offer to enter into this arrangement?—I cannot say at all. I never took much trouble about Wharerangi. Tareha, after the Sheriff took possession, asked me if I would accept Wharerangi on the same terms as were offered before. He said he was authorized by these people to say that it would be agreed to by the grantees of Wharerangi.

158. When did you come into possession of this land first? When did you buy it?—I cannot say. I think it was in 1870 or 1871.

159. How much was there that you bought? What area?—3,573 acres, I think.

160. How much did you pay for that?—£2,500, I think. I am not quite certain it was not £3,000. I think it was £2,500.

161. You sold a portion of it?—I sold a portion of it that was under lease to Mr. Braithwaite. I sold it to him.