

buildings, and he went in to see the Minister. I saw him speak to him. When he came outside, in consequence of what he told me, I said, "I will give you an agreement—namely, one-sixth share in the lease."

This was done in his office on the wharf, in Auckland, and witnessed by Captain Edwards, who was then in Mr. Holmes' employ. Captain Edwards remarked at the time to Mr. Holmes' "If you do not get the Land Court and put this land through you will have no share in the lease." Mr. Holmes said, "All right, I understand that." I had at the time only just landed in the colony, and did not understand the nature of Native Land Bills, but Holmes represented to me that his influence with this Minister would overcome any difficulties. I found that his representations as to getting a Land Court were all moonshine. The agreement had no connection whatever with the steamer business. The statement made by Mr. Holmes as to what took place at the door of the Masonic Hotel, at Waitara, is untrue. On that occasion Holmes taxed me with obstructing a claim of his against the Government for floating the "Hannah Mokau." It was quite true I had advised the Government not to pay any money. It was a claim of £600, and I told the Government it had not cost Holmes above £200. He was angry with me about that, but nothing was said about the lease. I know that he telegraphed to his solicitor in New Plymouth, as he says he did, and afterwards put the notice in the *Taranaki Herald*. The reason that I did not recognise him in the matter of the lease was that he could not carry out his part of the agreement.

When the lease came to be signed Heremia was away up at the head of the river, at Totoro, where he resided, and he was sent for. When he came down there were two days' discussion about the lease, which was in both languages. Mr. Dalton was the interpreter at the service of the Natives, and they sat up two nights discussing it in the whares. Messrs. Campbell and Grace also understood the Maori language, and assisted.

Heremia objected to the boundary of the lease as it was drawn up—namely, to Totoro; he seemed annoyed about it. Captain Messenger was sitting in the whare, also Grace and Dalton. The whare was crowded both with Maoris and Europeans. Heremia said, "You have no right to take my land at Totoro." I said, "Don't be angry with me; here is my old agreement, which I thought you all understood." Heremia had not been a party to the old agreement; but I had been given by Shore to understand that Heremia had thoroughly understood it. There was a good deal of discussion, and I brought out the old deed. Captain Messenger said, "Give it to me." He took it in his hand, and compared it with the boundaries on the new lease. Those who signed the old lease were present in the whare, and admitted having done so. There were about four of them, and they said, "It is not Jones's fault; the evil lies with us if any one is to blame." Te Rerenga stood up and said, "As the land has gone through the Court on the old agreement, we had better let Jones have it altogether." It was discussed, and Heremia still objected. He agreed that the line should be drawn at Mangapohue. Mr. Grace came to me, and said, "You had better take the line at Mangapohue—take what you can get."

Heremia said, "As Jones agrees to the line at Mangapohue, I will see that the remainder of the land from there to Totoro is held for him." The lease was altered in consequence. Before the lease was signed Captain Messenger had both the old and new agreements in his hand, and made repeated reference to them. After Heremia had agreed to Mangapohue, and was becoming very friendly, Captain Messenger said to me, "I see it was no fault of yours at all." I had explained the thing to him. Before the signing of the lease commenced Captain Messenger insisted on Mr. Dalton sitting close to him in the room. Captain Messenger himself read the lease out sentence by sentence, and was very particular in Mr. Dalton giving a reply as to every clause, to see whether they understood it or not. I got annoyed, because, as they had been discussing the matter for two days and two nights already, I thought that to agitate the Natives might upset the business, and I went away and lay down in my tent. I had been there a few minutes when Sergeant Gilbert came inside. He said, "Captain Messenger sent me for you; he says he would sooner you would come back, and hopes you will not think he is too particular in the matter; he is acting in your interests as well as in the Natives, so that this thing shall never be opened up again." I came back, and Captain Messenger explained to me that he was only so particular in the matter so that the Natives might not come back afterwards and say they did not know what they were doing. I have a distinct recollection of this conversation taking place, both with Sergeant Gilbert and with Captain Messenger, and this has been subsequently repeated by me in the presence of both of them, when they both admitted it at Pukearuhe in October, 1885.

With respect to Captain Messenger's conduct, the same allegations which have been made before the Commission by him, and his letter and report to Mr. Bryce, were fully inquired into by the Public Petitions Committee in 1885. After the Special Powers and Contracts Act was passed in 1885, I went to Captain Messenger's house at Pukearuhe. I found him alone in the garden. I asked him why he wrote the letter he did to Mr. Bryce, and never said anything to me about it. I was the more annoyed with him, because the day he wrote the letter he was at my house at Mokau, and I put him across the Mohakatino River in a canoe. I felt aggrieved that, if he thought there had been any wrong, he should not have mentioned it to me. He had frequently been at Mokau in the interval between the signing of the deed and his writing that letter. I said he wrote the letter because Mr. Shore was not included in the lease. I said, "If Shore had been interested in this, would you have taken any action?" and he said, "Certainly not." I said, "Do you remember telling the Natives that you were acting in the interests of the Natives as well as me?" He said, "Yes." I said, "When you saw the old deed, and the same conditions as to surface and boundaries, why did you not then communicate with the Government?" He said, "I never saw the old deed in my life." I said, "Why, you have had it in your hand and examined it." He said, "I never did." I was annoyed at his telling me a deliberate falsehood. I said, "I don't leave this camp until Sergeant Gilbert is brought here face to face, and if you do not produce him I shall