

189. We have not Mr. Rolleston's evidence?—We have Mr. McKerrow's evidence, who said Mr. Rolleston told him. I thought the matter should be left to Parliament—that that would be the fairest way of disposing of the case. Then the Cabinet took the view that the company might raise the question in Parliament by means of petition, and they were recommended to adopt that course.

190. In regard to the Horowhenua Block, will you look at questions 297, 298, and 299—the evidence of your Under-Secretary, Mr. Lewis?—I have read them.

191. Did you not postpone the completion of the Horowhenua purchase, having in view this period of five years?—Certainly not. I was never in a position to purchase the Horowhenua Block until after the subdivision had taken place.

192. But the subdivision, as you are aware, took place in 1886?—Yes; at the end of the year—in December, 1886. Even then I was not disposed to purchase the Horowhenua Block or any portion of it.

193. Had you not this period of five years in view as to the purchasing of the block?—I absolutely refused to purchase the block. Kemp came to me with Mr. McDonald, and I refused to purchase the block. I recommended Kemp to bring it under the Native Land Administration Act.

194. Why did you buy a large portion of it in the year 1887?—Kemp pressed me to purchase it on the ground that he wanted the money to relieve his son-in-law, Wiri-hana Hunia, who was very much in debt—that he was pressed, and was liable to be put in gaol; and, further, a number of people were anxious that I should obtain a portion of the land for special settlement. Mr. Wilson, a member of the House, represented that it was suitable for that purpose. However, even then I refused to do it. I thought it better for Kemp to dispose of his own land through the Native Land Administration Act, and strongly urged him to take that course. I was not inclined to purchase the block at the time.

195. Are you quite sure you did not tell both Kemp and Wiri-hana Hunia that you could not compete for the land until the expiration of this period of five years, as otherwise the company would have a claim to the land?—I have not the slightest recollection of telling them that. I do not see what that has to do with Kemp. All that Kemp wanted was money; he had no other object in view.

196. Are you not sure you did not explain to him, as the reason you would not give him the money at that time, that you could not complete your purchase until after the Proclamation, because, if you did, the land would fall to the company?—I think it is most unlikely, for the reason that when Kemp did come to me I absolutely refused to purchase.

197. Is it a fact that a portion of the money was paid within the five years—the first payment of £100?—Not for the purchase that was made.

198. Would you mind looking at the papers to see whether the money paid—the first payment—was not made within the five years?—A payment was made within five years, but it had nothing to do with that particular purchase.

199. What was it paid for?—It was paid on account of the whole block, which was under Proclamation. The position was this: The block was under Proclamation. Kemp asked that the Proclamation should be lifted. We refused to lift the Proclamation off the land. Kemp then urged that we should make him a fourth advance. It was urged that it was unfair not to lift the Proclamation, and thus allow him to be ruined. The result was that the Government advanced him a certain amount of money on this block, but not with the intention of completing the purchase.

200. You said you had made up your mind that you would not purchase the block, and yet you paid £500 to Kemp?—I referred to the whole block—that we would not purchase at the time.

201. Yet you paid £500 within the five years?—No; not at that particular time.

202. You have said that there was no money available for the purchase of land. Where did the £500 come from?—There was money available for Government purchases. There was no money for purchasing land for the company.

203. But there was £500 available to enable you to purchase land on this coast?—There was a general fund for land purchases, and out of the general fund we purchased land from the Crown.

204. You had no difficulty as far as funds were concerned in acquiring land on this coast?—I have explained that. Perhaps I had better repeat it. We did not consider that there was any money appropriated by Parliament for the purchase of land for a company under that clause of the Act.

205. The clause does not say the Government is to purchase for a company?—That is the meaning of the clause.

206. The clause is: that, if the Government acquires Native land on that coast, that land should be appropriated to increment the 30 per cent?—That is the construction we placed on the clause—that it was purchasing land for a railway company under a specific clause in the agreement.

207. I understand that you have no recollection of having made any such statement to Kemp or Wiri-hana Hunia, or to them both together?—No, not the slightest. I may say that Alexander McDonald was generally with them when they came to see me. I was not prepared to purchase land which I knew would go to a company without the specific vote of the House. That is my answer—that whatever I might have stated I was not prepared to purchase this land unless the money was specifically voted by the House.

208. And that was your policy right through?—Yes, that was my policy.

209. *Mr. Whyte.*] In the early part of your evidence you seemed to imply that you considered the facilities given by the Government to the company to buy Native land made up to some extent for the want of the twenty-nine thousand pounds' worth of land, and that, in fact, the company seemed to put more value upon that than the fulfilment of a promise?—The deputations that waited upon me on more than one occasion asked that we should lift the Proclamation from the Horowhenua Block to enable them to purchase. At sometimes, I think, their humour varied. The deputations did not always hold the same views exactly, but at particular times they were more