

887. I suppose you have no doubt in your own mind that if Mr. Sowry gets the land he will return you the money you paid for deposit?—I think he would be very glad to do so.

888. *Mr. Whyte.*] It is currently reported that you let it be known all over the district that you would give £100 to any one who would get the section and transfer it to you?—I never mentioned any sum to anybody.

889. You appear to have given them an impression that you would give them something?—Only in this case of Sowry. That was after he had drawn the section, not before. I did not let him have any such impression before he drew the section.

890. Surely, if they were asked to apply for you, they might have expected something?—As I told you, gentlemen, I expected to have to pay something.

891. *Mr. McKenzie.*] I think you said you would be prepared to treat him liberally?—Yes.

ALEXANDER PEEBLES, Jun., sworn and examined.

[This evidence has not been revised by the witness.]

892. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A carrier.

893. Living at?—Woodville.

894. You were an applicant for Section No. 1, Block XIV., in November last?—Yes, forest reserve.

895. Were you present with your father on any occasion when he saw a man named Joseph Barrott?—Yes, on the day previous to the day the drawing took place in Napier.

896. What took place?—We were just having a talk. I was not very much interested in it. He asked him to go and get an application-paper signed before some Justice of the Peace, or Resident Magistrate, or solicitor. They walked away up the street to get this done. I left them then.

897. You say you were not much interested: you were an applicant for this section?—Yes.

898. Were you applying for this section for yourself?—Had I got it, it was for my father.

899. Did you live with your father?—I had a working-share with him.

900. You are partners with him?—No: he gets a profit out of it.

901. You were not interested in this section for yourself, were you?—Not at all.

902. You simply took it up on your father's account?—Yes.

903. You were aware of the declaration that you have to make?—Yes.

904. You have to make this declaration: [Declaration read]?—I was under the impression that it did not matter if it was in the family.

905. You saw that declaration which has just been read?—I signed the declaration.

906. Before a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

907. Was that declaration true?—Not if it is not allowed.

908. You were not taking it up for your own use and benefit?—I was going to transfer to my father.

909. Were you present subsequently when your father saw Mr. Sowry?—That was when I signed this declaration before Mr. Sowry.

910. Were you present at any time when your father made any proposal to Mr. Sowry?—When I signed this declaration was the only time.

911. What took place?—My father asked Mr. Sowry if he was going in for the section, and Mr. Sowry said, No, he was not in for it, and that he had no intention of going in for it. My father then said, "Would you mind going in for me?" He said, "Oh! well, yes. I suppose there is no harm in it." So he started away and filled in the declaration straight off the reel.

912. That was the day before the drawing took place?—Yes.

913. You are quite sure that Mr. Sowry said he had no intention of going in for himself?—Yes.

914. What did your father do with the application? did Mr. Sowry sign the paper?—They had to go somewhere else to get somebody to witness it.

915. What did Mr. Sowry do then?—I went away. I do not know which solicitor they went to. I was not there when they came back. It was getting late, and father had to meet the train to town. He had not much time to take the declaration down.

916. *Mr. Smith.*] Did you sign the declaration before Mr. Sowry as Justice of the Peace?—Yes. We went to Mr. Sowry's place to sign the declaration. My father told me it had to be signed before a Justice of the Peace, and we happened to meet Mr. Sowry on the road, and he said, "Oh! let us go to the office."

917. So that when they arrived your father asked if he was going in for the section himself?—He said that he was not going in for the section.

918. He said he did not intend going in for it?—He said he had no intention whatever. He filled it in there on the table, and went away and signed it.

919. Was your application and Sowry's under the perpetual-lease system?—I have an idea that Sowry's was under the deferred-payment system, but I would not be certain.

920. Did Mr. Sowry give your father any money to pay for the deposit?—No, sir.

921. While you were present?—No.

922. Was it understood that your father was to pay the deposit on the application?—My father said to me before we went in, "I wish I could get hold of some one else: I have got one more marked cheque." And he said, "Perhaps Mr. Sowry is not in for it. He would be a good one to get."

923. And did he get him?—Yes.

924. Was it not understood in Woodville that any one who went in for your father and got the section would receive some bonus for it, or some present?—Not that I am aware of. I heard it rumoured that he had offered any one that got it a certain sum.