

decision. I was engaged with the whole of these arbitrations over six months. Mr. Livingston was engaged a less time. I was appointed by the lessees; he was appointed somewhat later on behalf of the Natives.

2572. *Mr. Stewart.*] What was the total amount you received?—£639 16s. 10d. for the several arbitrations.

2573. *Mr. Levi.*] What was the amount Mr. Livingston received?—£428 10s.

2574. *Hon. Mr. Acland.*] Was there any grumbling on the part of the lessees about the costs they had to pay?—None.

2575. *Mr. Levi.*] Do you know a piece of land at Waitotara belonging to Mrs. Durie?—Yes.

2576. You had the sale of that land?—Yes.

2577. Do you know the price that was paid for it?—Yes.

2578. What price was it?—There were three or four pieces of land sold. Two of them I sold—one at £8 or £8 10s., the other £5 10s.

2579. Do you know if they are let?—They are let to some person on the Coast.

2580. Do they adjoin Ihupuka Reserve?—Yes.

2581. They are similar lands?—No. The one at £8 or £8 10s. per acre is better than any of the reserves you refer to—nearly the whole of it is level land fronting a main road.

2582. Does it join Ihupuka?—Yes, that joins it.

2583. Do you remember it when he had the original lease?—Yes; he had no fence between the two.

2584. Do you know the property that Bremer occupies next to Ross's?—Yes.

2585. What does he pay for it?—Ten shillings an acre.

2586. When did he lease it?—I think he has leased it for the last ten years.

2587. Was it improved when he leased it?—Yes.

2588. Do you know that he said he would give 10s. an acre for Otautu?—I am not aware.

2589. Do you know the property that Valentine Smith leased from Shaw?—Yes.

2590. Do you know what he pays?—About 14s.

2591. Do you know for how long Bremer's lease is?—I do not know.

2592. When was it taken up?—The lease itself should show. I should think eight or nine years ago.

2593. Do you know the piece of land leased by Death?—That is about 13s.

2594. *Hon. Captain Kenny.*] What is the size of the block?—Death's is about 800 acres; Valentine Smith's, 700 acres; Bremer's, 600 acres.

2595. *Mr. Levi.*] Do you know the piece Jardine leased from Derrett?—Yes; I believe he gives £500 a year for 700 acres.

2596. All these lands are similar to Otauto?—There is this very great difference: On any or all these lands there is not an acre of bush; there may be some little bush on Death's and some on Smith's.

2597. In what does the main difference lie?—All these lands are open agricultural land of the best description, leased with all improvements when everything was very high.

2598. Is there any large difference in the quality of the land?—No large difference. I should say the land was similar in quality—that is, as to the soil. I do not think there is any piece of land more overestimated than Otautu (Ross's lease). The general impression is that it is such a splendid property: it is enormously over-rated.

2599. *Mr. Sinclair.*] You say it took you a great deal of time to ascertain the names of the Natives interested in the lands?—Not a great deal of time to ascertain the names, but that was one of the things.

2600. Did not the Public Trustee supply you with that information?—Yes; Mr. Rennell.

2601. Where was the necessity then to take up any time with that?—I applied to the Trustee to give me certified names of persons in the grants, so that there should be no possible mistake.

2602. Mr. Rennell supplied you with that information, did he not?—Yes.

2603. Did either of the arbitrators—yourself or Mr. Livingston—object to the charges made?—No.

2604. Did you allow him to charge what he liked?—Yes.

2605. And he allowed you to charge what you liked?—Yes.

2606. In any case did the Natives assent to the proceedings?—No.

2607. Their evidence generally was in the form of a protest against the whole proceedings?—Yes; I have got it here signed.

2608. *Mr. Stewart.*] Were these charges of the arbitrators fixed at the time you fixed the rent—at the same sitting?—After we had finished fixing the rents—after we had gone through all the evidence and taken the values—the question of the charges came up.

2609. Was the rent fixed by you made less on account of the large amount for charges, a large proportion of which had to be paid by the lessees?—The amount of the rents had nothing to do with our charges; we simply fixed such a sum as would recompense us for the time we were engaged; the amount of the charges did not influence the amount fixed for rent. For myself, I may say my time is of great value. I have a large business to conduct. I am an auctioneer in a large way of business.

2610. The division of the costs all through was as three-fourths to one-fourth?—Yes; one-fourth for the Natives.

2611. *Hon. Captain Kenny.*] You were appointed to act on behalf of the lessees?—I was appointed by each lessee. In the regulations there is a form of surrendered lease. In this form they have to fill in the name of the arbitrator they wish to employ, and then send it to the Public Trustee. The Trustee, on receipt of this, after a lapse of so many days, if the Natives will not appoint their arbitrator, notifies His Excellency the Governor, who appoints one on their behalf.