

2946. You had to do with the letting of the Stoney River Block, I believe?—Yes.

2947. How many Natives came to the hotel to see you?—Twenty or thirty.

2948. Were there only six or seven?—There were twenty or thirty.

2949. Did the twenty or thirty agree?—The chiefs agreed.

2950. Are you certain?—Yes: I had an interpreter there who knew them all.

2951. Who was your interpreter?—Captain Wilson. Mr. Messenger, Government Interpreter at Parihaka, was also there.

2952. Is that Captain Wilson of the Waikato?—No; Captain Patricio Wilson, of the West Coast, who was all through the war.

2953. How many out of the twenty or thirty agreed?—No one made any objection; the head of each hapu there consented to let the land.

2954. Are you quite satisfied they were the heads of the hapus who consented?—Yes; I knew them to be so personally.

2955. Did Sir William Fox have anything to do with reducing rents?—No.

2956. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I wish, Mr. Mackay, to be very careful to distinguish "Trustee's leases" from "confirmed leases." First, as to Trustee's leases; we will come to the confirmed leases later on. Now, the lands shown in this schedule, which you have put in the column "Total Area," are lands set aside by the West Coast Commissioner?—Yes.

2957. For the benefit of the Natives?—Yes.

2958. Then, in the column, "Leased by Public Tender," there is a certain acreage: under what Act, and under what section of the Act, are these leases given?—They are leased under the 11th section of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1881," and the regulations for issuing such leases.

2959. For February, 1882?—Yes.

2960. *Mr. Stewart.*] What leases?—Public Trustee's leases.

2961. Now, these leases were given by public tender?—Yes.

2962. Were any of these lands, where not occupied, under lease or tenancy?—If you consider a grazing tenancy from year to year, there were a number of such contracts spread over the reserves, but there was no leasehold tenancy, or any reservation of any portion of them to Europeans.

2963. What has happened with regard to these leases since the tenders were accepted and the leases granted?—There was nothing happened in my time except that the leases were extended from twenty-one years to thirty years.

2964. Your connection with it ended on the 31st December, 1884?—Yes.

2965. Under what authority were these leases extended from twenty-one to thirty years?—By Act of Parliament.

2966. Which one?—The first, I think, was the Act of 1883, now repealed—the 8th section of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1883."

2967. What was the next thing?—That power in the Act of 1883 was extended to the Act of 1884 in the same words.

2968. It was practically re-enacted?—Practically re-enacted, for the Act of 1883 was repealed by the Act of 1884.

2969. Were any new regulations issued under that Act?—No.

2970. The leases were extended for a thirty years' lease under authority either of the Act of 1883 or 1884?—Yes.

2971. Were any rights given to the lessees of these leases under the Act of 1884 which they did not previously possess?—I do not think so.

2972. Does section 9 not give them an advantage they did not possess before?—Section 8 of the Act of 1883 was not considered comprehensive enough to embrace the twenty-one years' leases that had been issued before the Act of 1883 was passed. This clause 9 supplements clause 8 of the Act of 1884. [Clause read.] That clause was enacted in consequence of the twenty-one years lessees complaining that the lessees which came after them in 1883 got nine years additional.

2973. That was to put them all on the same level?—Yes.

2974. Did they all obtain leases for thirty years?—Yes.

2975. Was there any difference made in the improvement conditions, or the rights of the lessees in regard to improvements, between the original terms and the terms created by the Act of 1884?—I relinquished my position as Reserves Trustee at the end of 1884. I am not aware.

2976. You did not take any action under the Act of 1884?—No.

2977. *Mr. Stewart.*] Those terms that were extended: was there anything in the leases beyond the simple extension of the term?

*Mr. Wilson:* No.

2978. *Mr. Stewart.*] Are we to understand, Mr. Mackay, that subsequent to the 31st December, 1884, you are unable to give us any official information?—Yes.

2979. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We will now go to the "confirmed leases"?—I consider that the position I hold as West Coast Commissioner is a judicial one, and that no counsel here nor any person whom they represent has any right to question me on this subject. I am quite ready to answer any question the Committee may put to me; but all questions put to me by other persons except the Committee I must decline to answer.

2980. At the time of the meeting in Patea you were acting as Reserves Trustee?—Yes.

2981. You informed the lessees as to the nature of the arbitration and the character of the order of reference?—Yes.

2982. What did you intend to convey as to improvements—as to what the improvements should be?—I stated simply what is in the papers there relating to the valuation for the new lease.

2983. You stated that all improvements as defined by the regulations were to be taken off, and the remainder of the capital value was to carry rent at the rate of 5 per cent. on it?—Yes.