

3054. Was there any objection as to improvements?—At the expiry of the lease the Maoris were to pay £5 an acre for improvements.

3055. You mean, not exceeding £5 an acre?—I suppose it would come to about £500 for every 100 acres which the Maoris would have to pay. The Committee is not to think that this is a wild idea of my own. I was informed of this by a solicitor, who told me that this was according to the Act. I told that solicitor that it was simply robbery of the land. I would not sign the lease. Of course, if I had seen European lands or Crown lands dealt with in this manner, it would be different; but it appeared to me that only Native lands were treated in this way. I think this was simply an arrangement by which the lands could be retained for the benefit of the people living about the townships. Mr. Barton told me that Parliament had passed the law. But I said that this law was passed at the instigation of Europeans interested in these reserves, and the Government were asked to give effect to it: hence these awards. I said that I could not act any further as arbitrator. I resigned my position.

3056. Did you only resign in one instance?—No, there was another. I made an award with regard to it on the block.

3057. *Hon. the Chairman.*] That is 36?—A part of it was inferior land and required a good deal of fencing; and another part was hilly; and another part was a sand-drift. It would not have been suitable for the Natives.

3058. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Do you know anything of these Bills being brought in by Parliament? Did you see these Bills before they were passed?—I did not; the Native members perhaps knew about it.

3059. Were any of your people informed of what was going on in Parliament?—They never knew of this being done.

3060. If your people had heard of it, would you have heard of it?—Yes.

3061. Do you consider the Natives capable of managing these reserves themselves?—I will not reply to that question, for some Natives are lazy and indolent, others are the reverse.

3062. *Mr. Levi.*] When you disagreed with the other arbitrators about the valuation of Ruatumoko, did you fix a rent yourself which you considered fair?—I did not mention what sum I thought fair because I saw the whole proceedings were bad.

3063. Did the other arbitrator mention to you the rental which he considered fair?—Yes.

3064. Do you remember what the sum was?—I cannot remember, but if you will refer to the award you will see the sum he fixed.

3065. Was it the umpire who fixed it?—I did not agree to the umpire sitting with us, for I knew he would support the award made by the other arbitrator.

3066. When the award was read by Mr. Barton, was the rent fixed by the other arbitrator put in?—I do not remember whether the rent was mentioned, but I do remember certain conditions in the lease that I objected to—that is, with regard to the length of the lease and the improvements.

3067. What was the reason of your drawing up a petition and the arbitrator refusing to go on with any other arbitration?—I resigned my office because I saw that the proceedings were bad—that they were injurious to the Maoris. It was an attempt to undervalue the land which had been valued by the Maoris before the Europeans had them. Had the lands been Crown land the rents instead of being reduced would have been augmented. It would never have been dealt with in the manner these Native lands were dealt with.

3068. Was it of your own reason that you refused to act as arbitrator?—Yes; I saw that a wrong would result to the Natives.

3069. Which of these two arbitrations did you sit on first?—Ruatumoko was the first. I could not agree to the terms of the Ruatumoko lease; but I agreed to the terms of the other one, for there was a good deal of sand on it.

3070. How long was it after you agreed to the second one that you drew up the petition which you signed?—Immediately after; I came right back to Wellington.

3071. *Mr. Wilson.*] Did you receive any money from the Public Trustee as rent from West Coast land?—No, but my relatives did.

3072. *Mr. Bell.*] You had been at war with the people on the Coast during the time of Titokowaru's war?—Yes, and before Titokowaru's war also.

3073. Did not the Natives object to you being an arbitrator, and say that, as you had fought against them, therefore you were not fit to be an arbitrator for them?—I do not believe that was the general opinion of the Natives; but one person, who had probably been instigated by Europeans, did stand up and say, "It was you who killed the land and the people." I replied to that person saying, "If this is your own idea, very good; but if you have been instigated to make this objection, I do not approve of it."

3074. Was not that the reason, or one of the reasons, why you did not proceed with the arbitration?—No.

3075. Have you not since said it was the reason?—It was not the reason. I was prepared to go right on with the work; but I saw it was bad work. I saw there was no justice in the proceedings—that it was bad work. The emolument for myself and the other arbitrator was very liberal. I had no objection to make on that score.

3076. But was it not the main reason for your not going on with the arbitration that the Natives objected to you being arbitrator? have you not since said so?—No; I have never made such a statement. If I had any straightforward work placed in my hand to do with respect to these reserves I would not hesitate to go through with it to-morrow.

3077. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Last session it was stated in the House that you resigned your position as arbitrator on account of ill-health: had that anything to do with it?—That was not the reason at all: the person who acted as interpreter at the Arbitration Court could bear me out. I was not taken ill until afterwards—until after I returned. If you doubt my word just refer to the interpreter.