

3173. What is the total area?—I do not know the area.
 3174. There are 2,337 acres in it?—Yes, probably that is the area.
 3175. Do you know how many acres are leased?—I do not know.
 3176. Would you think there are only 800 acres?—I should say there are more.
 3177. But that is the fact; there are only 800 acres leased: that leaves 1,500 acres in the hands of the Natives?—Yes; but some of it is only bush. It is not enough for our maintenance.
 3178. Were there not compensation-grants made to the Natives between Waitara and the White Cliffs—that is, rewards for their loyalty?—Awards were made; Government did give land to certain people that they approved of.
 3179. How many thousand acres?—I do not know.
 3180. *Mr. Rennell.*] Did you not receive land in addition to your pay for military service?
 3181. *Hon. Captain Kenny.*] With reference to land given to the Natives on account of promises and engagements, what quantity of it is available, for you said a great deal of it was bush, and not enough to maintain you?—Do you mean as to quantity or quality?
 3182. Both. I believe there are some 400 acres for our occupation; some of it is good, other parts are bad.
 3183. Is it sufficient for your maintenance?—Yes, it is sufficient for us to live on.

Mr. RENNELL examined.

3184. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is your official position?—I am West Coast Settlement Reserves Trustee.
 3185. Acting under the instructions of the Public Trustee?—Yes.
 3186. When did you take office?—The 1st of January, 1885.
 3187. That was immediately on Mr. Mackay vacating the office?—Yes.
 3188. Did you act in regard to the Public Trustee's leases?—Yes.
 3189. Also in regard to the confirmed leases?—Yes; but I had nothing to do with the arbitration.
 3190. First, as regards the Public Trustee's leases, what has been your function with regard to them?—The collection of rent and its distribution.
 3191. Among the Native owners?—Yes; and the inspection of the leaseholds from time to time to see that improvements were carried out according to the lease, and generally as to management.
 3192. Had any or all the extensions from twenty-one years to thirty years been made before you took office?—I think not.
 3193. Were these extensions made—all of them, or any of them—on your recommendation?—I hardly think so, but I can hardly answer the question at present. I think it was in virtue of an Act. They are not all extended, but most of the twenty-one years' leases have been extended.
 3194. Do you know how many of them are not extended?—Only a few. I may explain why some are not: At the time rents were so high that lessees thought they were not worth extending, and were very much inclined to throw them up.
 3195. Was the resolution of the Board under the regulations of 1887 for the reduction of rents in these cases made on your recommendation?—No.
 3196. *Mr. Stewart.*] Power was given under the Act of 1887 to allow the Public Trustee twelve months within which to collect rents: what was the object of giving him such a license?—As I have informed the Chairman, I had no hand in framing the regulations—I merely acted under them.
 3197. *Hon. Captain Kenny.*] What were the circumstances under which this extension of power was given to the Public Trustee to extend the lease from the usual term of twenty-one years to the unusual term of thirty years?—I had nothing to do with that; it was by Act.
 3198. Are you aware of any circumstances which could have led to this apparent indulgence being extended to the tenant—an indulgence which you say was not availed of in some cases on account of the high rents?—I am not aware. I think it is one of the Acts which names thirty years.
 3199. What is your exact position? are you an officer of the Public Trust Office?—My title is West Coast Settlement Reserves Trustee, acting under the Public Trustee.
 3200. From whom did you get your appointment?—From the Governor.
 3201. You are not allowed a discretionary power, but are wholly under the control of the Public Trustee?—In some particulars I am, in some I am not.
 3202. *Mr. Wilson.*] When you took office you found a great number of leases already granted?—Yes.
 3203. Since then have all the lessees held on to their holdings?—No; I could hardly say the exact number. Some have surrendered their leases; some leaseholds we have taken possession of for non-payment of rent. In only two cases have the surrenders been accepted, I believe.
 3204. Have these lands been relet in every case?—No.
 3205. For what reason?—The Natives wished to keep some portions of the old leaseholds. The former rents were very high; they have never been revalued, and were not relet at the wish of the Natives.
 3206. How do you know that?—By personal conversation with them.
 3207. Have you reported such cases?—Some I have; some possibly I have not. I could not answer positively.
 3208. Have you received any information as to what is to be done when the Natives have asked that the properties shall not be relet?—I believe there is a legal question involved in regard to these lands.
 3209. Do I understand that the Public Trustee has not power to give these lands back to the Natives—the lands comprised in the surrendered leases? Have not the Natives been allowed to go on them and take them as their own?—Yes, practically.