

the Natives never received them?—The notices were taken to their places and thrown into the whares. They did not care to receive them.

331. Were they in Maori?—No; they were all in English. I picked up some of them, looked at them, and found that they were in English. I spoke to the Natives about it.

332. *Mr. Bell.*] They were served by an interpreter; but as soon as they saw the interpreter they bolted: was not that so?—They did all they could to keep out of the way.

333. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you got before you the leases in which this witness is interested as executor under both the wills of the two Native chiefs—Taurua and Ngairo?—Taurua was chief of the tribe residing on the Patea River. Ngairo was chief of a people who reside at Whenuakura.

334. Which are Taurua's leases: 40?—The principal one is that of Mr. Ross, at Otauto.

335. And the other?—Is Walter Symes's (16).

336. And George Gower's, and William Gower's, and Samuel Gower's are Nos. 41 and 42?—Yes; it is only a small portion of Taurua's.

337. Then, 43 and 44?—I forgot them. I know some small leases towards Waverley. I forget the names of them. That one of Wilson's is Ngairo's; William Wilson, No. 47, 523 acres; Newland's, and Symes Brothers', and Symes senior's are also Ngairo's. These are not all, but they are all I can think of at the present time.

338. *Mr. Levi.*] Do you know if any other attempt was made to get Natives to appoint an arbitrator except this serving with notice?—I do not know personally, but I have heard.

339. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You do not know anything that was done?—Not of my own knowledge: nothing further was done but asking them to appoint an arbitrator.

340. Who asked them?—Mr. Rennell spoke to them.

341. Were you present?—Yes.

342. Were you present at any of the arbitration sittings?—Yes; at the whole of them held in Patea. I am not quite sure as to the whole, but I was present at most of them.

343. *Mr. Bell.*] How many arbitration sittings were there altogether?—A considerable number; perhaps all the leases in the Otoia Block and Otauto. I was present all the time, and took notes.

344. Were you examined?—Yes; I was examined by the arbitrators.

345. What were you examined about—as to values, or what?—Yes; they asked me as to values. I heard the whole of the proceedings. I saw the method in which the thing was conducted.

346. Did the Natives attend?—They attended simply to protest. They did all protest repeatedly and constantly during the whole time.

347. *Mr. Peacock.*] Did you see any objection to the fairness of the arrangements made?—Yes; I thought so at the time. Mr. Livingston, who had been appointed by the Government, did not seem to me to take any special interest in the matter; he never put any question to the Natives; everything was done by Mr. Cowern. He took a very active part; he was the appointee of the lessees. He tried to show that the value of the land was very low when it was taken from the Maoris. He drew evidence of that kind from the lessees. I thought it was not fair. Mr. Livingston did not do so as regards the Maoris.

348. Do you mean he drew out evidence of the lowness of the rentals?—The lowness of the value of the land. He would put such questions as, "What was the state of this land when you took it?" then they would state what it was when they took it, the statements in many cases being not true, such as that it was covered with fern and bush, whereas in many of those cases it was covered with grass, and very good grass too.

349. What I want to know is, whether there was anything unfair in the Arbitrators' Court?—I think an arbitration should be a balance between two parties: the balance in this case was not equal; it was held on the side in favour of the lessee.

350. Do you mean to say they were not asked questions from the other point of view?—It appeared to me that Mr. Livingston did not bring that out from the evidence.

351. That is to say, by questions, in the manner of one who was protecting that side which he was supposed to represent?—Yes.

352. Do you mean as to the ability displayed?—I do not know whether it was ability or not; but he (Mr. Livingston) did not do anything. He did not attempt to do anything to show that the values were higher than that stated by the lessee.

353. Did you make any objection to his taking the evidence, or did the Natives offer any for their view of the matter?—No; they did not wish to give evidence.

354. Was the principal objection urged by yourself as to the manner in which the Court was being held?—No; we objected to the Act, which almost confiscated the property.

355. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you mean the Act of 1884 or the Act of 1887?—1887.

356. *Mr. Levi.*] Were the Natives represented by anybody—by any counsel?—No.

357. Did any of the Natives call any evidence?—I do not recollect that they called any evidence; they were called on to give evidence, but the evidence they gave was simply a protest against the value of the land put in by the lessees.

358. *Mr. Bell.*] The Court asked whether any one wished to give evidence; and, if so, whether they would come forward; then any one that liked came forward?—Yes; but the Natives did not give any evidence to show that they were willing to abide by the arbitration, or that they were willing to accept it.

359. *Mr. Levi.*] Do you know anything about Mr. Livingston?—I do not know anything against him. He is a man of integrity and honour. He is a great landed proprietor; but he is looked on as the friend of the lessees. I have nothing to say against him. He is a man of the highest integrity.