

and distributed the Act of 1887 and the regulations under it. What I wish to know is whether all the Natives were there?—No; I do not think so.

436. Were the interests which were not there protected?—Yes.

437. *Mr. Peacock.*] Were they invited to be present?—Yes; they had notice.

438. I understood you to say that they preferred to have a committee of their own not because they could manage better, but because they liked it better?—I said I was not satisfied that they would manage better, but that they would be better satisfied.

439. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Was that your own opinion—that the management of the Natives would be better than the present administration?—It would be better, because more satisfactory to the Natives.

WEDNESDAY, 16TH JULY, 1890.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS, cross-examined by Mr. H. D. Bell.

440. I do not recollect who was with me at the interview with Sir Robert Stout. There were Maoris, but, I think, no Europeans. Mr. Hammond did not take part in the proceedings. Hammond was a missionary amongst the Natives. I do not know who persuaded them to take action. I have spoken to them about the Act which gives power to arbitrators to deal with the land. It is not a fact that the Maoris were persuaded by me, except to the extent that we consulted together. I did not instruct Mr. Sinclair. I went to the interview with Sir Robert Stout at Patea. Mr. Hammond was not present. The half-caste Stowell and Mr. Sinclair were present during part of the meeting; but I did not hear it recommended who should take the place of the Public Trustee. I simply suggested a committee or board of persons to be elected, and I did not suggest myself as one of the trustees. My name was suggested, but I did not approve or disapprove. It was not my act that the Maoris were not represented by arbitrators—represented by themselves. They themselves were opposed to arbitration. I gave them advice, but I am not sure whether I gave it before the speeches began. I do not deny that the Natives are acting on my advice in this matter. The Natives objected to Major Kemp as hostile to the Natives on the coast, but I have no knowledge why Major Kemp retired.

441. I did not advise the Natives to avoid the service of the notices; and I do not know that great expense and trouble was caused by the Natives avoiding service. I know that the Natives did not accept the services, but do not know whether they avoided them by getting out of the way. I was present at the meeting at Hukatere, and Mr. Rennall produced the notices at that meeting. The Natives cleared out. The Natives there did not accept the notices. I believe they left to avoid the services.

442. I have been on the coast for nearly fifty years. I was originally a blacksmith, at Wanganui, the Hutt, and Patea. I have land on the coast—two or three hundred acres, from Europeans. I carried on my trade till sixteen or seventeen years ago.

443. I was a land-purchase agent for the Government when I bought my present place at Stratford. The place comprises thirty or forty acres. I was farming while an agent for the Government—at least, for a portion of the time. I had always something on hand.

444. I am competent to speak about values of land. I paid up to 15s. an acre five or six years ago on the banks of the Patea River, close to Patea.

445. The Waitotara Block was bought in the first instance for myself, and I then sold it to the Government. The first money paid to the Natives was my own private money; £14,000 was paid to the Natives. The first payment by the Government was made to me personally, on account of what I had advanced to the Natives.

446. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Advance. Is that term not subject to some misconception?—I first bought the land for myself, and then I sold it to the Government. I was employed by the Government to complete the purchases I had begun on my own account; and the money advanced by the Government was to cover the money I had paid to the Natives.

447. *By Mr. Bell.*] The last cheque was for £5,411; and it was paid over to the Natives, who returned it to me. This is the first time I have heard of a suggestion that I did not pay the money.

448. *By Mr. Bell.*] Then, there was the Kaitangiwhenua Block, of 90,000 acres, concerning which the Natives alleged, by petition, that you never paid any of the purchase-money?—I never knew of that petition. It is incorrect in every particular. I give a most emphatic denial to the statement that I had their money.

449. *By Mr. Bell.*] I did not get a renewal of my license as an interpreter. I did not know why it was not renewed. I did not know that a Committee of the House called the attention of the Government to the fact that I was a licensed interpreter. I was not aware that the report in 1886 *in re* the petition of Uruteangina and others was the reason why I did not get my license as an interpreter. I did not know of it until quite recently—until some time last year.

At this stage the witness obtained leave to make a personal explanation, which he made as follows: The purchase of the Kaitangiwhenua came about in this way: The Natives asked me to buy some land. I had money, and did not object, as I could get the land cheap. In some time I had purchased 200,000 acres. I made advances on the purchases, and bought the land in the name of W. Cowern. After I made the advances I had an idea that the Government should buy all Native lands; and I offered the land to the Government, if they liked to take it off my hands. I offered it to Sir George Grey and to Mr. Sheehan at the Waitara meeting. They afterwards agreed to take it, and said they would take the block. They also asked me if I would complete the purchase of Kaitangiwhenua, and I said I would if I were paid for what I had already done. I was then placed on the Government service as a land-purchase officer, and to do other things; and was to be paid about £1,000. I then went to Wellington, and got from the Government a cheque for £1,000,