

which was to cover the expenses I had been at in buying from the Natives. I then went on with the purchase. I had to survey the block, and that took a long time. During that time I made advances to the Natives out of my own money, and became responsible for goods supplied to them by storekeepers. That might have been irregular, but I stipulated that if I bought the land I could buy it in my own way. I had that understanding with Mr. Sheehan and Sir George Grey. I went on with the purchase till the whole matter was complete. During that time I had several sums from the Government, and at the Land Court meeting at Waitotara I paid the whole of the money to the Natives. There was then due to me from the Government a balance of £5,000 odd for advances I had personally made to the Natives, and on account of what I had become responsible for to storekeepers on behalf of the Natives. I made a loss of £2,000 on that particular purchase.

450. *By Mr. Bell.*] I do not know how much I had in the bank. I did a large business. Before I received the £5,000 odd from the Government I had paid the Natives in money, and became responsible on their account for sums exceeding £7,000.

The witness resumed his personal statement as follows: At last, when the Land Court had made the award, and the money was paid to the Natives, I expected to get my money at once from the Government, and Mr. Bryce promised at Patea that I should get it. I then went with the prisoners to Lyttelton. Mr. Bryce then said it would be three months before the money would be paid. During that time the Government dispensed with my services, I having completed the whole purchase. Then Mr. Gill came up to Waitotara to pay this money, and I thought he would give the money to me; but he paid it to the Natives in the publichouse. When this had been done, Uruteangina said, "We now have got the cheque for the land, but it does not belong to us; it belongs to Williams." He then handed the cheque over to me. I thanked them, and the Natives lauded my actions. Then Uruteangina said the Natives would like to see their own money; and he suggested that I should take it back and let them see it, and afterwards go home with it. I agreed; but outside the place a Native advised me to take care, as there was a conspiracy amongst the Natives to pick up the money, and not to let me have it again. I thanked the Native, and then went home, very much troubled, for I had been anxious to keep my word to Uruteangina. As I said, I went home: I felt not well; the strain of matters had affected me considerably; and afterwards I cashed the cheque. Subsequently, other Natives came up to Patea, not to ask me to bring down the money, but to go through the accounts. I took the accounts down, and placed them before them, and when we got to the amount over the cheque, they got up and went away. I had vouchers for the amounts. I did not feel justified in doing otherwise than as I did. I feel that I acted justly and honestly; and I can bring evidence as to the truth of my statement.

451. *By Mr. Bell.*] Before that, I had on several occasions done the same thing. The Natives liked to see their money in one lump, just like children. Some of them were anxious to *muru* the money—to pounce upon it, and keep possession of it wrongfully.

452. I did make a composition with my creditors not long after I got the £5,000. I had paid the people who had given goods to the Natives; but could not say how much I gave in that way, and how much I kept to myself. I did not keep thousands. I have not the receipts for what I paid. I became bankrupt in order not to pay a certain debt. I did not owe the estate 20s. in the pound. I have since paid in full some of those who were not so paid at the time.

453. *By Mr. Peacock.*] Though in arranging the purchase I put in Cowern's name, yet, in dealing with Sir George Grey and Mr. Sheehan, I arranged as though it were in my own name. I had the land. I had put Cowern's name in in order to meet the difficulty caused by my being an interpreter. I did not think it was dishonest.

454. *Hon. Captain Kenny.*] Was the purchase completed by Williams before he made the offer to the Government?—Oh, no.

455. *By Mr. Bell.*] I gave the Natives 2s. 6d. an acre for the land, and the Government gave me £1,000 over and above the purchase-money. But I never got it; I did not bother about it.

456. *Hon. the Chairman.*] But why did you not claim the £1,000?—Oh! having been made a bankrupt, I let the matter slide.

457. *By Mr. Bell.*] The land had not been investigated by the Native Land Court at the time I began to negotiate with the Maoris. I suppose I acted illegally, and I was a licensed interpreter. Taurua's will was drawn up by Mr. Adams, solicitor. I was appointed executor. The Native Land Court recognised the will. I was not appointed successor. Taurua gave instructions through an interpreter, and I was named executor. I have not received the rents since Taurua's death. The person who was appointed successor by the Native Land Court got the rents. I proved the will and paid the debts. I got nothing under the will. I got the Natives to pay the debts. Ngairo's will was prepared by Mr. Hamerton, and I was appointed executor. It was not my wish that I should be executor, but I had been asked if I would act.

Mr. Bell said he would bring positive evidence as to the values, and evidence to meet that of the present witness.

458. *By Mr. Bell.*] Mr. Rennell spoke to me some time ago on the matter of Taurua's will, and threw some light upon it.

459. I have no copy of the written agreement with Ross; I do not know when I last saw it. I am telling the Committee what is according to my recollection.

460. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Will you tell the Committee whether you received an intimation from the Native Affairs Committee? Do we understand you to say that you had no opportunity of giving evidence?—Yes; I was never summoned. I was never aware of it in any way.

461. Did you never receive notice of your services being dispensed with as licensed interpreter?—I saw a *Gazette* notice, and I sent in for a renewal of my license. I do not remember what answer I got then. I am not sure that a word was said about the Committee not recommending its renewal.

In replying to Mr. Wilson, of the Public Trustee's Office, as to their being in the matter 160