

not paid any for seventeen months; William Gower has not paid his rent for more than twelve months.

590. Any other?—For Putahi; we have not received the rent for that—Walter Symes's, No. 16.

591. Any other?—I have heard also that the rent for a piece of land called Manutahi had not been paid.

592. What is the name of the lessee?—I have forgotten his name at present. Have heard his name, but I have forgotten it at the present time.

593. You say, then, that you received the notice, but you did not know what it meant. Do you recollect a meeting being held where there were two hundred Natives present?—I recollect a meeting at Hukatere, but there was not one hundred Natives present. That is where I stated the objection we had to the new leases.

594. Was Mr. Williams present?—Yes, he was.

595. What rent do you suppose that Mr. Walter Symes still owes?—I could not say just now, but I would be able to tell you on seeing the lease.

596. Did I explain to the Natives that these lessees claimed to pay under the awards, and that that caused a great deal of bother in these cases?—I do not know whether the delay was caused by the Europeans claiming to pay under the awards.

597. I do not say it is the cause, but do you not know that I carefully explained the whole of this matter to you?—All you told me was that Gower had paid his rent.

598. Did I not take papers with me every time I went to Patea explanatory of the whole of this matter, and how these cases stand?—I do not know anything about it.

599. *Hon. the Chairman.*] When you say that the European lessees had not paid their rents, do you mean that they had not paid them, or that the Natives did not know the lessees had paid the rent at the Trustee's office?—I mean that they have not been paid to us personally. When we asked Mr. Rennell he told us the money had not been paid to him.

600. *Mr. Rennell.*] Take the Otautu Reserve: do you know that there is money in my hands, and that you and your people refused to take that money?—We wish this case to be over first, then we will take the money.

601. What is the reason?—This is the reason—"what we are at now." We wish to have matters settled by Parliament. When that is done we will take the money.

602. Why did you receive Ross's rent, and not Gower's?—Because it is about the same amount that we received formerly—it amounted to about the same rental that we received under the old leases.

603. Did you not refuse to receive it because it was rent paid for a new lease under the award (Gower's case)?—I objected to it because we were receiving so little under the arbitrators' awards.

604. Was the reason you refused to take it because it was rent under the new lease?—I objected to take it because it was so small in amount. I wanted the same amount as was paid under the old leases.

605. *Mr. Peacock.*] Why do you blame the Trustee for not paying Gower's rent, when the Trustee actually offered it? Did you say you would not take it?—I said that George Gower had not paid his rent for more than twelve months.

606. And W. and S. Gower for more than a year?—I say that it is more than twelve months since we received rent from W. Gower; I do say that I have not received the rent for that land.

607. Why do you complain of not receiving the rent, seeing that Mr. Rennell says he offered it to you?—William Gower's has been paid, but George Gower's has not been paid at all.

608. But why should you blame the Reserves Trustee for not giving you that which you refused to take?—It was owing to the smallness of the amount that I objected to take it from the Public Trustee.

609. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Were you at the meeting at Ngatiki?—Yes.

610. Do you remember the form of the petition being discussed?—Yes.

611. Do you remember it being referred to a committee?—Yes.

612. And the committee making sundry alterations in it?—Yes.

613. Are the words mentioned in this brief [brief handed to witness] the final alterations?—Yes.

614. Were you on the committee?—Yes.

615. Was that a representative meeting of the whole district?—There were two representative committees—one at Patea, and one at Ngatiki.

616. And both were represented at this meeting?—Yes.

617. You had grievances against the Public Trustee before going to that meeting?—Yes.

618. Were they grievances of long standing, or had they only existed for a short period?—We considered that the grievances commenced about the time Mr. Rennell took office, as we did not care about renewing our leases when the original leases expired.

619. Up to the present time?—Yes.

620. Do you know whether it was suggested at that meeting that I should take Mr. Rennell's place?—No; I did not hear anything of that at all; all I heard was that people should say you were to conduct the Bill and the petition through the House.

621. That I should act as their solicitor?—Yes; for the Bill, and for the petition also.

622. Will you give us a general outline of the wishes of that meeting?—They are expressed in that petition.

623. The printed petition?—Yes; they all agreed to that.

624. *Mr. Bell.*] Do you talk English, Ngarangi?—No.

625. Can you not read and write English?—No.

626. You can read English?—No.