

granting these renewals of leases. Were you and the other Natives told that you had no power to object; that the only business you had to do there was to determine what was a fair rent for the lands in their then condition?—No; we were never so advised.

878. What did you think the arbitrators had to do when they were appointed?—We understood they were to grant renewals of the leases of our land.

879. *Hon. Mr. Hislop.*] Did you understand that the renewals were to be at the same rent, or that the arbitrators were to fix the rent?—I never heard that the rents were to be lowered or to be kept at the same rate.

880. What did you understand—that they might be kept at the same rate, or that they might be altered?—I never knew before the Court sat what was the object—whether to reduce the rent or not.

881. When the Court was sitting, did you understand that it was sitting to alter the rent, or that it might alter the rent?—It was not until we attended the Arbitration Court that we found it was held to reduce rents of the leases.

882. You understood that while the Court was being held it might reduce the rent?—I did not know that the arbitrators would have power to reduce the rents.

883. Never at any time?—That is, at the time they were sitting.

884. Never at all?—I did not know during the proceedings that they had power to reduce the rents.

885. Did you not know that they were calling evidence as to the value of the land and the rentals?—I did not.

886. Were you at the Court all the time?—I attended the Arbitration Court at Patea for two days.

887. *Hon. Mr. Peter.*] What did you think the arbitrators were there for?—I understood that their work was to carry out some instructions that had been given to them with regard to the leasing of the land.

888. *Mr. Peacock.*] You stated that you were away for some time. On your return, did your people make you aware of the meeting which had been held with Mr. Rennell for the purpose of explaining what was likely to be done in regard to these leases?—My people never told me that during my absence at the Ngapuhi they had had meetings with Mr. Rennell in reference to the renewals of the leases. They told me the only meeting they had with that gentleman was in regard to payment of rents for our land.

889. Did you hear from them anything about it afterwards—about what took place at their meeting with Mr. Rennell?—All I heard was that when Mr. Rennell came to Patea the Natives went to see him to draw their rents which were then payable under the old leases.

890. *Mr. Wilson* (Public Trustee's Office).] The witness, in the early part of his evidence, said that a man named Hunter offered to lease his land: would he give the Christian name of Mr. Hunter?—I do not know his Christian name, but he lives at Patea.

891. In the town or the district?—He is a farmer in the Patea district.

892. Does he live near Waverley?—No.

893. Can you state exactly where he does live, by naming the stream or the road?—He lives on the main road between Wanganui and New Plymouth—near Patea.

MONDAY, 21ST JULY, 1890.

KAHUKAKA in attendance and examined.

894. *Mr. Levi.*] Where do you live?—At Waitotara.

895. Did you sign any leases of reserves to Europeans?—Yes.

896. Which?—Te Umuroa.

897. What are the names of the lessees?—One is named Berry.

898. Any one else?—There were only two leases—Te Umuroa and Te Ihupuku.

899. Who leased Te Umuroa?—James Hughes.

900. What was the state of the land leased to Berry at the time it was leased to him?—It was in its natural state—in fern.

901. What improvements have been made since by Berry?—He has cut down part of the forest; he has also burnt off some furze.

902. Are there any buildings on it?—He has built a house on it.

903. Are there any fences?—Yes; he put up some fences.

904. Have any of these improvements been made within the last six years?—He commenced the improvements at the time he took over the lease; he has been going on with improvements since.

905. Have the house or fences been put up within the last six years?—I think the house was erected in the year 1879.

906. Any fences put up within the last six years?—Yes; there have been some fences put up within the last six years.

907. How much?—I think, about half a mile of fences have been put up within the last six years.

908. When was it put up?—I think, about two years ago.

909. What improvements have been made by Hughes since the land was leased to him?—He has cut down portion of the forest, sowed part of it with grass. He has put up a house and fence on it.

910. Have any of these things been done within the last six years?—Yes; some of them were put up within the last six years.