

958. What questions were you asked?—All I did was to stand up in Court and give them a check against leasing by arbitration—against the extension of the lease. I protested against the extension of the lease to thirty years—against the Arbitration Court dealing with the land in any way.

959. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I should like to know what form this protest took: what did you do?—I told the Court I objected to these leases being let in that way.

960. *Mr. Bell.*] Was Mr. Williams there?—Yes.

961. Was Mr. Williams in your company?—Yes.

962. *Mr. Sinclair.*] Were you one of the delegates sent to Patea to attend the meeting at Taiporehenui?—Yes; I was one of the delegates.

963. Do you know when that was?—I recollect about the time the meeting took place, but I cannot tell you the year. I think it was last year.

964. Towards the end of last year?—Yes; toward the end of last year—about November.

965. Do you know that there were delegates there from the whole of the West Coast?—Yes.

966. What were the complaints made at that meeting by the people against the Public Trustee?—I could not say just now.

967. Did they complain of anything else except the trouble about the Arbitration Court?—No; there was no other subject taken in hand but the leases.

968. Do you remember what their wishes were in regard to paying the rent: did they wish Mr. Rennell's administration to continue?—No; we objected to that.

969. What did they suggest?—That the leases should be returned to us and let us have the management ourselves.

970. Do you think you were capable of managing these leases yourselves?—Yes; we thought we could manage very well.

971. Was that the opinion of the whole of the Natives, or only of a few?—That was the opinion of the whole of us.

972. *Mr. Peacock.*] You were to manage in the event of your superseding the Public Trustee: in what way? How would you manage? What course of action would you adopt?—We should manage according to Maori custom and usage.

973. Did you wish to appoint a Committee?—Yes; we would carry out what we did in making the agreements with the Europeans according to the original leases.

*Mr. Bell:* Some of these grants have 150 grantees in them.

974. *Mr. Peacock.*] One hundred and sixty: but how would you manage with so many people?—We knew how, because there were delegates from every tribe at the meeting, and they were all of one opinion.

975. *Mr. Rennell.*] You said that a great deal of time was lost in paying these back rents: are you aware that the rents are paid early in the month, after they are received by the Public Trustee?—Some of them have not been paid.

976. Are you not aware that legal questions are pending in connection with a good many of these leases, and that is the reason the rents have not been got in?—With regard to William Gower, it has been in arrear for a twelvemonth.

977. Why have you refused to take your share of the money offered by me for Gower's rent since you have been in Wellington?—I did not know that it was Gowers' money I was to receive.

978. Do you mean to say that you did not this very morning ask me whether any part of Gower's money was mixed up with the money received the other day?—Yes; I asked you.

979. Why did you refuse to receive it?—I was under the impression that it was the rental of another piece of land.

980. You did not know it was Gower's rent?—Yes.

981. Then why did you ask me to keep it back?—Some of the rent has been paid to me, and some has not.

982. I offered it to you, and you refused to take it: why?—I refused it, because you kept part of it back.

983. Why did you refuse it?—Because there was twelve months' rent due, and I thought you were not going to give me twelve months' rent.

984. What rent?—For Otautu.

985. Give me the name of the lessee?—William Gower. He has two leases. That is the money that is not forthcoming.

986. That is the money you refused, then?—Yes.

987. Were you afraid that it would compromise them by taking rent under the award?—Yes; that was the reason I objected to it.

988. Do you know how many meetings were held at Taiporehenui?—I cannot tell how many meetings took place.

989. Were you at them all?—No.

990. Did you ever hear, at any of these meetings, that Mr. Sinclair was the person who should replace me in regard to the collection of rents?—No; I heard that a meeting had been held, but did not hear any statement of that kind.

991. Did the women stand up and say, "If we do away with Rennell we will never get any money; we never got any before he was appointed"?—No; the majority of them did not say so.

992. Did any of them say so?—No.

993. *Mr. Bell.*] When did you come to Wellington?—Last year.

994. On this present occasion?—On the 16th of June.

995. Have you been here ever since?—Yes.

996. Did any pakehas come with you?—No.

997. Who interpreted your evidence to the lawyers?—Williams did.