

3230. Are you aware of any instructions having been given from the Public Trust Office?—I am not aware of any.

3231. Do you know if the arbitrators were requested to apportion a new rent when the lease was in two or more grants?—I believe there was something of that kind. One of the arbitrators asked me which would be most convenient, and I told him it would be more convenient to have two separate leases than to have one lease over parts of two grants.

3232. In paragraph 6 of the petition it is stated there has never been renewals of Trustee's leases; that can refer to confirmed leases only?—Yes.

3233. In regard to paragraph 8, it says that all the lands have been leased by the Public Trustee, and that a great number of your petitioners are without land to live upon?—That is quite untrue.

3234. The final paragraph says, that, in consequence of being without land, your petitioners have had to lease land from Europeans?—They have plenty of land for their support. I have known Natives to have a great fancy for a particular bit of a European's land—they lease it, take one or two crops out of it, and then give it up. But certainly no Native has occasion to lease land from Europeans through the action of the Public Trustee. With reference to that piece of land mentioned as reserved for the Natives, it was open land. The heavy bush-land the Natives will not touch. If Europeans had not leased it it would have been heavy bush still.

3235. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Take this extended lease of Finlaysons's—it is an extension for nine years?—Yes.

3236. How was this rent fixed?—The extension is at the same rent as the original lease.

3237. All extensions are the same?—Yes.

3238. *Mr. Stewart.*] With regard to these surrenders, do the Natives agree to accept the surrender of the leases?—Are you speaking of the Public Trustee's leases?

3239. There were leases surrendered?—I think only two for non-payment of rent. I am not sure whether the Natives were consulted or not. The lessees were too poor to go to law with. The circumstances were such that expense was saved by accepting surrenders.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 1890.

Mr. RENNELL, examination continued.

3240. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We practically finished with you yesterday, Mr. Rennell, in regard to the Public Trust leases: is there any other point you wish to refer to?—Not that I am aware of.

3241. Then we will come to the confirmed leases, if you please, Mr. Rennell: when did you first begin to have any dealings with the confirmed leases?—In the beginning of 1886, I think, sir.

3242. Was any one dealing with them before?—No, except the West Coast Commissioner.

3243. What duties do you perform in regard to these leases?—At the present time?

3244. At the present time. Well, you may say from 1885, when you took office?—I first sent a circular round, by the instructions of the Public Trustee, informing all the confirmed-lease holders that in the future they must pay their rent to me, which the majority of them did; and in the usual course I distributed the rents amongst the grantees.

3245. What have you been doing since then?—I defined also the interest of the grantees.

3246. You did that in virtue of the Act of 1884?—Yes.

3247. In the definition you acted under the Act without instructions, did you not?—I think there is a clause that I should be directed to do so.

3248. Were you assisted by the Native Assessor?—I was.

3249. Who was he?—Te Kahui in one place. I have forgotten the name of the Assessor who assisted me in Waitotara. He was only a few hours there.

3250. Why was Kahui chosen? Was he chosen by you?—Yes.

3251. Why did you choose him? What reason had you for doing so?—I gave a reply to that question last year, before the Native Affairs Committee. Mr. Sinclair asked me what my reason was for selecting him, and I replied that he was a clever Maori, well fitted for the work, and it could be done economically, and that is a great matter to the Natives, because the cost was then all charged to them.

3252. Are you aware that it has been stated in evidence to the Committee that Te Kahui was regarded by the Natives unfavourably?—I have heard it said here, but I give it an emphatic denial.

3253. You give a denial to the fact that the Natives regarded him as a hostile person?—Decidedly.

3254. Have you ever heard Te Kahui spoken of in unfavourable terms by the Natives?—Only, of course, as Natives speak against each other. I never heard anything against this man. He is perhaps rather boastful.

3255. Do they speak about each other more than Europeans do?—Just about the same. I should like to say a little more while you are on that point. The charge made against me last year was that Te Kahui was actually too friendly to these people, and was interested. If you will permit me, I should like to read an extract of the evidence taken last year.

3256. I think we would rather have it, as it were, fresh now?—If I simply read the questions and answers taken down last year that would explain the matter. Last year they tried to make it out, not only that he was friendly to them, but that he was interested; and this year they appear to make out that he was unfriendly.

3257. Was he interested?—He was not any more than you have heard from Major Kemp about he himself being interested in that case. I have no doubt he is related. All Natives are related more or less.