

3311. And with what result?—I found that the Natives generally said it was very wrong; but, as I promised that the money should not be dealt with in that way any more, they said they would agree to recognise the receipts as binding on them; and I reported this to the Public Trustee.

3312. But were there not a number of beneficiaries—that is, persons interested in these rents?—Yes; a large number in some cases. There were in the two I quoted.

3313. Did they all acquiesce in this transaction or not?—No.

3314. Then how were the rights of these persons not so consulted disposed of?—They must have been ignored eventually.

3315. But have they been ignored by the Public Trustee? Who ignored them?—The lessors and, of course, a few of the Natives who took the money and got the advances.

3316. Did the Public Trust Office recognise that as a regular proceeding—as a regular method of discharging rents?—As what would have been considered before he took charge as a fair proceeding, and on the understanding that it was to cease.

3317. But did you not say that practically the payments overlapped the period at which the Public Trustee took charge?—In nearly every case.

3318. Then, has the practical result of that been that the representative Natives have in all cases received what they were entitled to or not?—All the lessees were in the habit of paying their rents irregularly to the lessors. The lessors would go to the lessees whenever they wanted money, and get advances, and we practically permitted these payments which had been made to the lessors to stand good. I considered it was only fair it should be so, as it would be fair before the Public Trustee took charge.

3319. Although they overlapped the period at which the Public Trustee took charge?—Yes.

3320. *Mr. Peacock.*] After all this irregularity that you are speaking of had been wiped out the payments were made in a regular way?—Yes.

3321. Strictly?—Yes. Nothing of the kind has been permitted since. That is one reason why there is a difficulty with Macgregor, because we will not recognise his payments.

3322. That is, since the Public Trustee has had charge?—Yes; since I gave Mr. Macgregor notice not to pay any more Natives.

3323. You strictly enforced the Act by making them pay only to the Trustee?

*Mr. Wilson:* There is a section of the Act of 1881 which forbids Mr. Rennell or the Public Trust Office to recognise any order given by the Natives in favour of a European.

3324. *Mr. Sinclair.*] These reserves, Mr. Rennell, are granted under Crown grants to the Natives?—Yes.

3325. With the usual restrictions against alienation?—I think there was a special restriction in regard to this land.

3326. Can you give us the special restriction? You need not give us the exact wording?—They were inalienable, except by exchange for land of equal value, or by lease for twenty-one years.

*Mr. Stewart:* Is not that stated in the Act?

*Mr. Wilson:* No, sir. There are two kinds in the Act—absolutely inalienable and partially inalienable.

*Witness:* And some are without any restrictions at all.

3327. *Mr. Sinclair.*] The general run of them contain that clause?—Yes.

3328. Have you any of the old Crown grants now?—While Sir William Fox was dealing with these matters he distributed a great number of these Crown grants, and he directed me to distribute them after he had left New Plymouth for Wellington. As soon as I took office in 1885 I made a request to the Registrar to detain all the Crown grants unless there was only one person named in it.

3329. A great many are in the hands of the Natives then?—A good many are.

3330. That [showing witness a document] is an account supplied to me at the request of Patohi by the Public Trustee: can you explain what rent that is unpaid?—This the first time I have seen this, Mr. Sinclair. I should have some difficulty in explaining it.

3331. That statement shows there is rent two years in arrear, does it not?—No; it does not say what date it is. Oh, yes [reading], fourteenth of the eleventh, eighty-nine. Arrears, £32 10s., to 30th June last. Mr. Lysaght says we have charged him too much, and he declines to pay. That is as regards No. 4.

3332. Is that the reason they are uncollected?—That is the only reason I am aware of. I only speak from my own list. I should require to look it up to go into it fully. On No. 6 here I do not think there is anything due.

3333. Of course you know the particulars of the confirmation of this lease of land at Parapara?—No.

3334. About when was it confirmed?—Does it not say in my letter? I could not say, really [letter here shown to witness]. I have not noted the date here, but I should think in March last.

3335. Shortly before you wrote that letter to the Natives?—Yes; it might have been confirmed some time before. Mr. Captain sent the lease to me, and asked me to get it registered. That is the first I saw of it.

3336. The letter is in Maori, informing the Natives the lease had been confirmed. I believe the lease was originally signed by Moerewarewa and Tohi Tana?—I cannot say that positively.

3337. But it is evident from that letter that Moerewarewa received the rent. Is Moerewarewa interested in the land?—She is not in the Hamua grant at present.

3338. She is in the Hapotiki grant at present?—Yes. There has been a great deal of trouble about surveys, and we have had to readjust the rents several times.

3339. Do you remember any trouble with the Natives as to this land?—I read of it in the *Hawera Star*.