

466. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Do you say the money was handed over?—I handed it over myself—£75.

467. Did you see it handed over in each case?—Yes; I handed it over myself. The money was put on the table, and I counted it out for the Natives in front of them, to let them see that the notes were right.

468. The Native says he only received a portion of the money: is that incorrect?—Decidedly.

469. Even if they—Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson—say that they deducted certain costs?—The whole of the purchase-money was handed over to the Native, and then there were certain charges made by Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson. They were read over to him; he consented to them, and gave the money back according to instructions, and expressed himself perfectly satisfied.

470. Was this receipt [produced] translated on that occasion?—Yes.

471. If any payments were made to Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson, was the Native made fully aware of what they were for? Did he understand them at the time he paid the money?—Yes; he said he knew everything about it, and he consented, and said he was perfectly satisfied.

472. *Mr. Baker.*] And raised no objections at the time?—No.

473. *The Chairman.*] You had been employed at the same time interpreting for other transfers from Hami, his elder brother?—Yes; from Hami to Hapimana.

474. *Mr. Kirk.*] You made your charges against us for doing the work. Is that the receipt you gave us on that occasion [produced]?—Yes, for Hapimana's work.

475. Is that amount mentioned among the items the Native was charged?—Yes.

476. Was that amount interpreted by you to Hapimana among the items [account produced]?—Yes.

477. You were employed to interpret this transfer to the Queen?—Yes.

478. Did you make your charges against us?—Yes.

479. Was that the receipt you gave us [receipt handed in]?—Yes.

480. How many years have you been interpreting for our firm?—About three.

481. And during that time you have done a good many transactions, I suppose, for us?—Yes.

482. Mr. Atkinson generally attends to Native matters?—Yes.

483. Will you tell the Commissioners, as a man accustomed to deal with Native affairs, what you think of the conduct of Mr. Atkinson in reference to Native matters?—All I can say is that every transaction I have seen in Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson's office with the Natives and otherwise have been always conducted in the most straightforward manner that it is possible to conduct affairs. They have left no pains untried to get the Natives to fully understand the business in hand, and to find out if they were perfectly satisfied.

484. Has any complaint ever been made to you after the transaction has been concluded?—On the contrary, the Natives when outside expressed themselves as very pleased at the way in which their business had been conducted.

485. *The Chairman.*] I think we must now understand you to say that you know the Natives received the stipulated amount, but you do not know what they handed back in each case?—I did know at the time. I was perfectly satisfied at the time the whole transaction was square. I have had forty-five years' experience in dealing with Natives and Europeans too. If all transactions in land had been conducted in the same way as they have been conducted in Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson's office there would not, in my opinion, have been the trouble there has been in New Zealand with the Natives.

GEORGE RICHARDS examined.

486. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am a cabinetmaker.

487. Have you acted as agent for Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson in the purchase of Native land, or got Natives to sign, and so on?—Yes.

488. It has been given in evidence here that you have induced Natives to sell their land, contrary to their own wishes, by informing them that if they did not do so they would be compelled to do so?—That is false; I have not.

489. Can you tell us what you have done that might have given rise to that?—I have bought certain lands for Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson?—I know I did tell the Natives that if the Government liked they could take the land under the Public Works Act; but I never told them as an inducement for them to sell it.

490. Then, you are quite sure nothing was said by you to them that might compel them to sell their land against their own inclination?—Yes, quite sure.

491. Do you still act in that capacity?—Yes.

492. For Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson?—Yes.

493. Do you understand the Native language?—Not much. Just a little.

494. *Mr. Baker.*] Why did you tell them the Government could purchase under the Public Works Act?—It came out in the way of conversation. I do not know whether I really did tell them or not, but I knew the Government could take it under the Public Works Act. All the Natives that I dealt with were quite satisfied with the price they got. I asked them if they were satisfied, and they said they were quite satisfied.

495. Have you heard any dissatisfaction expressed since?—No, quite the contrary.

496. Who paid you for your services?—Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson.

497. No charge was made to the Natives in connection with this special question of purchase of land for a rifle-range?—Nobody ever paid me except Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson.

498. *The Chairman.*] Had you any difficulty in getting the Natives to agree?—Yes; one specially—Hami Iwitaia.

499. What section was that—point it out on the map?—[Section pointed out.]

500. What steps did you take to secure the purchase of it?—I went to Parihaka. I think I was there four or five times to see the Natives on different occasions. Hami wanted to sell, but he