

237. Did you afterwards hand the money to Mr. Lundon?—No, I did not. They were conversing with Mr. Lundon on the way.

238. And they promised to hand the cheques to him?—Yes.

239. The vouchers that were signed would set forth the price per acre?—Yes.

240. Was the attention of the Natives called to this point—to the 7s. 6d. per acre?—They were told by the Postmaster.

241. Did you know that the signing of the deed and the vouchers on the part of the Natives was a sham in this respect: that they were not to get the consideration stated on this document?—I did not believe it to be a sham. I believed that it made an arrangement that was binding upon themselves. Of course, if they had not agreed to do what they did it might have been called a sham.

242. You knew that they were not getting the money set forth as the consideration in that deed?—Yes.

243. *Hon. Mr. Mitchelson.*] In following up the question put by Mr. Richardson, I ask you whether you did not consider that, seeing the Government were paying 7s. 6d. an acre for this land, the Government fully believed that the Natives were going to receive the 7s. 6d.?—They fully believed that the land was sold for 7s. 6d., and that they were only to receive 4s. 6d. The Natives knew perfectly well that although the Government paid 7s. 6d. the Natives themselves would only receive 4s. 6d.

244. Arising out of that answer, do you think the Government would have offered to pay 7s. 6d. an acre for the land if they had the slightest conception that the Natives were only going to receive 4s. 6d.?—Well, under the circumstances I think it quite possible. What the Natives represented to me was this: that Mr. Lundon had to bear all the expenses attached to the purchase—interpreters, boatmen, messages, telegrams, and all connected with it, and give his own time. I did not think that the Natives were being badly treated, especially knowing, as I did, that they were entertaining seriously the question of accepting an offer of 2s. 6d. an acre for it.

245. Supposing the Government had sent their own land-purchase officer for the district to purchase this land, what would it have cost the country?

*The Chairman:* That is merely a supposition.

*Hon. Mr. Mitchelson:* He can tell pretty well. He knows well enough what the cost would be.

*The Chairman:* I do not think the question is in order; it is simply an imaginary case.

*Hon. Mr. Mitchelson:* It is not an imaginary case. I am simply asking the witness to state—supposing the Government had sent their own land-purchase agent in the district to make the purchase, what would the cost have been?

*The Chairman:* That is simply a supposition. I do not think the witness should be asked such a question as that.

246. *Hon. Mr. Richardson (to witness).*] You stated that the deed was signed before the agreement?—That is a mistake; I corrected that afterwards.

247. You stated that the agreement was signed before the deed?—Yes, in every case.

248. You stated that the dates on which the agreement was signed are stated on the agreement in pencil?—Yes. [*See explanation to question No. 94.*]

249. If the agreement was signed, as you say, before the deed, and the dates upon the agreement are reliable, as you state, how comes it that the dates to each name on the agreement are exactly the same dates as appear on the deed? [Deed and agreement handed to witness.]—I cannot understand very well how that came about. It is quite possible that some would sign the agreement in the morning, and the deed in the evening.

250. Then you withdraw the statement you made previously? You have stated that in no case was this deed signed by the Natives on the same day as the agreement was signed?—No; I will not withdraw it generally. As for the first signature, I cannot conceive for a moment how the thing occurred, because they did not sign the deed on the same day as they signed the agreement.

251. Is it not usual for interpreters, when obtaining signatures, to put in the date when the signatures were received?—No.

252. It is not?—No.

253. *Hon. Mr. Richardson.*] These are your figures?—Yes.

254. *Mr. W. Kelly.*] Was Mr. Millar and Mr. Clark aware of the existence of the agreement between Mr. Lundon and the Natives?—Not to my knowledge.

255. *Mr. Parata.*] You stated before this Committee that Mr. Millar explained to the Natives the price they were to get for their land per acre—7s. 6d.?—Each word of it, from beginning to end, including the printing. They had to sign the vouchers twice.

256. Did he explain that in his own office before he passed the cheques through the window?—Oh, yes. He had the whole thing completed before he passed the cheques out at all.

257. Did Mr. Millar explain to the Natives that they were to have 7s. 6d. an acre?—Yes.

258. You are clear in your own mind that he did explain that to the Natives?—He did.

259. Did you, as interpreter, translate that to the Natives?—I was not required to do so. I was simply called on to identify the man.

260. Do not you think, as Native interpreter, it was your duty to explain that to the Natives?—Had I not explained the deed, and the price to be given for the land, I certainly should have done so. As they knew the whole circumstances, I did not think it was necessary.

261. You did not think at the moment that it was your duty to do so?—Yes, if I had not read the deed over to them and explained it.

262. Do you not think it was your duty to do so?—It would have been my duty to do so if I had been asked.

263. You would not do so without being asked?—I might have been interfering with somebody else's duties; it was no part of my duty. If asked, I would only have been too happy to do so.