

Natives had travelled in some cases long distances and required money for immediate requirements, also to share among their relatives. He presented me with slips of paper on which the number and values of cheques were to be made out for each owner: in each case the cheques when added together amounted to the full value of each share. This matter was inquired into after the first few shares were purchased, and, on a similar explanation being given, authority was granted to continue paying for the land by a number of cheques. I understand the document authorising me to do so is now in the possession of the Native Affairs Committee.

Q. 4. Did you believe, when paying each Native his share, that such was the net value of his interest to which he was exclusively entitled?—A. Yes.

Q. 5. Did you see the Natives, after you had paid them, hand the money to John Landon, or did you see Landon take the money from the Natives, and, if so, when, and in which cases?—A. In several instances I saw the Natives, after receiving their cheques from me, turn round facing John Landon and hand their cheques to him. I never saw John Landon take the cheques except those handed to him, nor even ask for them. I cannot remember the names of the Natives I saw handing their cheques to John Landon.

Q. 6. Did you understand John Landon to be acting on behalf of the Government or of the Natives?—A. I understood John Landon acted for the Natives as their agent. The wording of my instructions reads: "The Natives will be brought to you by Mr. John Landon at convenient times to sign the deeds and receive payment for their shares, and Mr. Landon will arrange for the attendance of a licensed interpreter without expense to Government."

Q. 7. Do you know if the Natives were aware of the Government paying much more for the land than the money returned to them by Mr. Landon.—A. The mode of paying the Natives was so clear that there could be no misunderstanding as to the amount each Native received corresponding with the amount on the vouchers.

Q. 8. Before the Natives signed the vouchers did you make them clearly understand that they were receiving 7s. 6d. per acre from the Government for their land, or were the vouchers read to them by you, or were they in any way distinctly informed that each interest amounted to £217 10s.?—A. The Native interpreter explained the transaction to the Natives; the sum was written on the vouchers. I wrote the number of each cheque on the voucher before the Natives signed, and carefully in the presence of the Justice compared with the Native the number of each cheque he received with that on the voucher; and on a sheet of foolscap the numbers and amounts of each cheque were written. The Native, Justice of the Peace, and myself counted it; and the Native being perfectly satisfied that the amount of the cheques corresponded with the voucher, they were at once handed to the Native, the Justice of the Peace certifying to the correctness of these sums on the said sheets of foolscap. These documents are in my possession.

Q. 9. Did the interpreter, Mr. Cochrane, carefully translate the deed of transfer in your presence so as to lead you to suppose that the Natives thoroughly understood they were selling their land to the Government at the rate of 7s. 6d. per acre?—The wording of the deeds were read over by the Native Interpreter in every case before any signature was received, and the Natives seemed to me to perfectly understand what they were signing.

Q. 10. Did you hand the cheques direct to the Natives, or to anyone else on their behalf, when they signed the deed in your presence?—A. After the Natives had signed the deeds and vouchers, and counted the amount on the cheques, and were thoroughly satisfied that the sum they were receiving corresponded with the amount on the vouchers, I placed the cheques into the Native's hands, at the same time calling upon the Justice of the Peace and Mr. Flood to witness that I did so. The cheques passed direct from my hands into the hands of the vendors in each and every case.

Q. 11. Did you place the cheques before Rikihana, or did you place them in his hand, when he signed the deed in your presence?—A. The mode of paying Rikihana was exactly the same as the others.

Q. 12. Add any facts within your knowledge outside of the above questions, if you consider them of sufficient importance and tending to elicit the whole truth?—A. The fact that the Natives in every case counted up the amount of their cheques, carefully comparing the amounts with the vouchers they had signed, showed that they were thoroughly aware of the nature of the purchase of the land, and the amount being paid for each share by the Government.

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WEDNESDAY, 31ST AUGUST, 1892.

Mr. JOHN LONDON, examined on oath.

1. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Landon, will you just state to the Committee anything you have to say in reference to the petition?—Yes, Sir. The first portion of my evidence would be in connection with Mr. Cadman, and I would like Mr. Cadman to hear what I have to say. [Mr. Cadman shortly afterwards entered the Committee-room.] I was down here last session on special business of my own. After Parliament was prorogued, I had a conversation with the Native Minister. In the conversation I had with him I asked him how much money he had to buy land this last financial year. He informed me the sum that he had; I forget the amount. I asked him was he going to buy any land north of Auckland. He said, No; he did not know there was any land for sale there. I informed him there were many small pieces. He told me, if I could get land without any trouble, so as to put people on it at once, he would buy some. I told him that I knew of pieces of land that would be suitable for placing people on. I think he asked me if I had a list. I am not sure whether I had a list or not. He said he would make inquiries, and would let me know in a day or two. In a day or two after I saw him on the same subject. He laid a plan on the table, and asked me to point out the blocks to him. He took the plan in his hand and went to the Surveyor-General's