

in their own houses. I have travelled hundreds of miles to see them in their own places, and collect them at Herd's Point on a certain day.

63. You only became their agent on the date of the agreement?—That is all.

64. Before so becoming their agent, before that agreement, did you arrange with the Government as to the price for the land?—I did not fix the price. The Surveyor-General fixed the price, and Mr. Cadman told me afterwards that that was the amount that was to be given.

65. Then, had you accepted the price offered by the Government prior to the signing of the agreement referred to?—In connection with that block I told Mr. Cadman that it was plenty for it—I thought I could get it cheaper.

66. You said the Government offered the price they thought just. I want to know from you why you had accepted the offer of the Government before the agreement was signed by the Natives constituting you their agent?—I told Mr. Cadman I could get the land for less in his own office.

67. *Hon. Mr. Mitchelson.*] That is not the question. You know what "acceptance" is? You know that an offer is made by the Government, and you either accept it or not?—I told Mr. Cadman I would accept it. I told him he was giving enough.

68. Then, when you accepted the offer of the Government, on whose behalf did you accept that price?—The Natives; certain Natives. I told Mr. Cadman that I had great influence with the Natives—I do not think anybody will doubt that—and that I was very anxious to extend the village settlements there, and open up these blocks for that purpose. I told him I could get the Natives to agree.

69. Now, when this agreement was signed, authorising you to act as their agent, did they all sign it on the one day?—All that were there signed it on the one day—six.

70. Did they all sign on the one day?—Yes, they did, all but three. These three were not there.

71. When was that signed—before or after the execution of the transfer?—The day before.

72. How is it that their signatures are dated on different days?—I did not know they were dated at all until I looked at the document here in Wellington.

73. Did all the owners, with the exception of three, sign the deed of conveyance on the one day?—Yes, the six did.

74. Where was this agreement signed?—In Mr. Cochrane's office.

75. Mr. Cochrane acted as interpreter?—Yes.

76. Who else was there besides yourself, Mr. Cochrane, and the Natives?—No one else. One or two of their friends may have been there, but I do not think so.

77. Did you have any qualified witness of the execution of that agreement?—No.

78. Did you not think it was necessary in an important document like that, setting forth the terms upon which they were to part with their land, and appointing you as agent, to have some one there with the Natives—some qualified person to witness the signatures?—No, I did not. I had no doubt at all of the Natives. I have European enemies in the district, but I do not believe I have one Native enemy.

79. Did they know that you had that interest in the agreement when they signed it?—Every one of them; and they knew its purport before they were asked to sign it, and before it was written.

80. How do you know that they knew the purport of that agreement when they signed it?—I told them myself. We had a conversation about it, and Mr. Cochrane interpreted it the night before. I asked the European portion to be read and translated. There was not a dissentient voice to sign the agreement.

81. Did you ask Cochrane to read both translations?—Yes; I was not frightened about the other side because it was Maori. I said, "I don't care whether you read it to them or not," because it was in Maori.

82. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] Did the Natives read over in your presence the Maori version of that agreement?—I do not think they did. I do not think all of them did.

83. Do you know sufficient Maori to be able to tell whether the interpreter conveyed to the Natives in the Maori language the full purport of what there is in that agreement in English?—No; I do not think so. If it was a bad interpreter who translated, I think I would know; but if it was a good one, I would not know. My Maori is peculiar.

84. That means that in this case you could not tell whether the whole of the contents were properly interpreted?—No, I could not.

85. Now, at the time they signed this agreement, did you inform them that the price the Government was going to give for the land was 7s. 6d. an acre?—No.

86. After they signed the agreement, did you tell them?—No; they all knew I was going to make a lot of money out of it, and they were all glad—but they did not know how much.

87. Did you tell them before they signed the deed?—When they went to sign the deed I did not speak a word. Cochrane read it to them, and laid his hand on the duplicate, saying this was the copy.

88. At the time they were signing it, did you tell them you were to get 7s. 6d. an acre?—No, I did not.

89. After they signed the deed, did you tell them?—No, I did not. Of course they knew, it would be no use in me telling them.

90. Then, you did not consider it your duty, as their duly appointed agent, to tell them the price the Government were really paying for the block?—I did not do it. I told them I was going to make a good thing out of it.

91. Can you state positively that from the explanation of the interpreter of the contents of the deed to the Natives that they understood the price of the block was 7s. 6d. an acre?—They would know the whole amount, but I do not know whether they would know that the rate would be 7s. 6d. an acre.