

*Witness* : It does not seem to affect the question of re-entry.

*The Chairman* : That is for our decision.

*Mr. Allen* : This witness refuses to answer.

*The Chairman* : We must get either an answer or no answer.

*Witness* : Then I must refuse to answer. That will probably be the best way of putting it.

*The Chairman* : Then I would suggest that you retire and the Committee will deliberate.

*Mr. R. McKenzie* : I think you might ask for the approximate amount.

*Mr. Allen* : Perhaps it is fair to ask him for the approximate amount. I do not want him to answer what he does not know.

*Witness* : I know approximately.

*The Chairman* : Your answer, when given, becomes the property of the Committee. If the Committee will be satisfied with that answer I shall be happy to go on.

The Committee decided "Aye."

*Witness* : The approximate amount was one-eighth in shares, and, I believe, something like £1 an acre.

28. *Mr. Allen*.] In cash?—Yes.

29. How many acres?—There are thirty odd thousand. I do not know the exact area.

30. *Mr. Duncan*.] How many shares?—One-eighth of 250,000. I am not perfectly confident about it, but I believe that was the amount.

31. *Mr. R. McKenzie*.] Does that mean fully-paid-up shares?—Yes, fully paid up.

32. *Mr. Allen*.] That is to say, about £70,000 went in cash and paid-up shares, and about £60,000 is to be devoted in prospecting?—Something about that.

33. That is £130,000 out of the £250,000. What became of the balance?—I could not tell you. The people who float at Home generally get a very large interest for finding the cash. The usual thing is that they take about two-thirds. I am always pleased if I can float a company at Home and get one-third back, unless it is something extra good.

34. There is only one of these corporations in England connected with it?—I believe there are five or six, but I do not know, and cannot say. These things they keep to themselves always.

35. Is the Anglo-Continental Corporation connected with it?—I really do not know, but I believe they are.

36. *Mr. Duncan*.] What quantity of land is comprised in this application to be taken up under this company?—Some 30,000 acres.

37. This prospectus you have mentioned is to cover the whole 30,000 acres?—Yes; that is what they bought.

38. Who was it bought from originally?—From the Kauri Timber Company.

39. Originally?—I believe the original grants were direct from the Natives.

*Hon. Mr. Cadman* : Yes; that is quite right.

40. *Mr. Duncan*.] This company has bought from the Kauri Timber Company 30,000 acres?—Yes.

41. Were they aware that they had no right to the minerals when they went into this purchase?—We thought we had every right. That is why we bought it.

42. They would surely have advice on the matter before they went into such a large undertaking?—I do not think they considered advice would be necessary. The best legal advice was taken.

43. Do you consider yourself an expert in mining business?—I do not like the name expert at all, sir.

44. I am not surprised at that. However, you have a knowledge of how mines are worked?—I think so, sir.

45. Do you really think it would be to the advantage of New Zealand to allow land to be occupied under similar conditions to those, so that blocks of 30,000 acres would be handed over to a company to do what they liked with—mine or no mine?—It would not pay a company to tie it up.

46. If they do not get the labour they could tie it up?—The object of the corporation that has taken up this block is to develop it, and then float subsidiary companies. That is how they are going to make their money. That is what we are proposing to do, and what we are doing now.

47. What I was alluding to was the fact of this company expecting to get this concession. Would others get it, too?—I should say that if strong companies take up blocks of land it will be a good thing for the colony. It brings in English money without any cost to the colony, and it is not as if there is no mining land left, and I may say that I believe many shareholders of the smaller companies will certainly lose their money.

48. It does not matter whether large ones use it or not?—Well, people without capital are rushing into the small ones as if they were mad.

49. Have they brought this land under the Land Transfer Act?—I believe the whole of it is under it now.

50. Do you know on what date that was got?—No; I could not tell you that.

51. *Mr. W. Kelly*.] You stated just now that when this land was purchased the purchasers understood they were entitled to mine?—Certainly they did.

52. And you said previously it was a question of law?—That is the question Mr. Fraser asked me, whether the Crown held the prerogative over the Royal minerals; that is a question of law.

53. *Mr. Fraser*.] Whether you could mine without the permission of the Crown?—We maintain we can, of course.

54. *Mr. W. Kelly*.] I apprehend, then, that all other lands in the country under the Land Transfer Act would be in a similar position to this land?—No, I think not; because, as far as I can remember, there was an Act passed in 1873 under which, when any land was alienated by the