

Crown, the Crown held the mineral rights, thereby showing that prior to the passing of that Act they conceived they had not the mineral rights.

55. That is what your company bases its claim on?—Purely.

56. Supposing this Act was passed, how would it affect your company when there are ample means for compensation for lands taken from them?—It would affect them in this way: the land would be taken from them.

57. You would be fully compensated for it?—On surface-value only, whatever that may be; and if you take the Coromandel Ranges, and take off the kauri-trees, 2s. 6d. an acre would be dear.

58. If you have the right to the mines I suppose you would be able to show they are of value?—This Act would take away the mines and give you only surface-value.

58A. You say the capital of the company is £250,000?—That is so.

59. I notice Mr. Gordon has made a statement that it is £600,000?—I think Mr. Gordon is wrong.

60. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] At the commencement of your address you said this Bill affected the Kauri Freehold Gold Company principally?—I do not know that I said that, because there are other companies in the same position.

61. You consider your company to be the principal one?—No; there are much larger companies than ours.

62. You have told us the amount that was paid?—Yes, approximately.

63. You are not one of the promoters of the company?—No.

64. You cannot say who they are?—To my knowledge Mr. Horton was the only one in the colony.

65. Has this company got a colonial board of directors or an advisory board?—Yes, sir.

66. Can you tell us who they are?—Mr. Horton, Colonel Burton, Mr. W. S. Wilson, and myself.

67. Is the company registered in the colony?—I think so.

68. I would like you to say definitely?—I think it must be registered. We have a registered office, I know.

69. You say as a fact it is registered?—I do not say as a fact, but I know it must be, because you cannot carry on business without.

70. You told us there are few shareholders in this company?—Yes, in the colony.

71. Can you tell us the names of those who hold these shares, and who paid for them originally?—I do not think I should be right in replying; that is going into private individuals' business.

72. It is very important, in my opinion?—I only know one or two who hold shares, but there may be others; they held no shares till the company was floated in London.

73. I would like to find out who they are?—I do not know any one who can tell. The colonial register has not been opened.

74. *The Chairman.*] Your answer is that you do not know?—I know a few—my own personal friends—but it would be impossible for any one to give a list of the shareholders.

75. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] What effect will this have on the Kauri Company?—I take it it will better their position.

76. I mean the passing of this Bill?—Oh! most detrimental. I thought you meant the effect of the company.

77. How will it be detrimental?—Because it will interfere with the flotation of subsidiary companies in London, the advantage of which they would share.

78. I suppose you are aware of the Ohinemuri—

*The Chairman:* That does not apply here at all.

79. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] As long as it does not apply I do not want it. Were you satisfied when you went into this company that you had got a title?—Yes; I never had any doubt in my mind.

80. Are you aware of a company holding about a hundred thousand acres of land, and exploiting it for similar purposes?—Yes; Taitapu.

81. They are in a somewhat similar position to what you are?—I think so; I should say in an exactly similar position.

82. You say this land was granted direct from the Natives?—I believe so.

83. Do you know if any minerals were reserved for the Crown?—No; I do not know that there were. There are instances where Natives sold their land on the Coromandel Peninsula and maintained their mineral rights; and there are cases, I believe, where the Crown has bought from the Natives and allowed them to retain their mineral rights.

84. Did the Crown buy from the Natives in this case?—I do not think so.

*Hon. Mr. Cadman:* No; the Crown has never held this land. It went direct from the Natives to Europeans, and passed on through two or three hands to the Kauri Company.

85. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you think the effect of this Bill will be to drive capital from the colony?—Most decidedly. We have already had cables from London asking what those re-entry clauses are. Once you check the stream of English capital it is most wonderful how it ceases. You will have gentlemen before you who can probably speak more definitely on this subject than I can—Mr. Gordon and Mr. Hunt, who represent the Rothschilds at Home.

86. Do you think their evidence will be from interested motives?—I think they will speak the truth.

87. *Mr. O'Regan.*] I think I understood Mr. George to say that the freehold was necessary to give proper security?—Not absolutely necessary, but they like freehold because they consider it best.

88. And this Bill will check the influx of capital? How do you account, then, for money coming to the West Coast where we never think of giving a freehold title?—Once you raise the question of changing the title from freehold you do not know what is going to happen.