

mess, and if they got into a mess to get them out of it. I was actually engaged at Maranui. When Te Kooti came back from the Chathams — where I had sent some of his men myself — this trouble broke out again, and there was great consternation. People had been massacred at Poverty Bay and other places. I was asked by the Government to take command of the district between Napier and the Upper Waikato, which was deserted by Europeans and friendly Natives alike, and I enlisted a number of Natives for the Government—about a thousand—among others Mr. Henare Tomoana, who is now in the Upper House. I do not know whether his memory goes back to these things, but I have the documents here which will very easily clear it up. I got put in command then with a free hand. There was no other officer, and the direction given to me in writing by the officer commanding was to do what I thought best under the circumstances. I enlisted and armed the Natives, and paid them and commanded them generally, as well as the Armed Constabulary—and also the Permanent Militia and Scouts. Then, I acted as Lands Commissioner for the Seventy-mile Bush, and in that way arranged the settlement of all the stations that are in there. Before these hostilities broke out in Hawke's Bay I was keeping as much in the background as possible in consequence of acting for the Government, and armed the settlers of Hawke's Bay surreptitiously in the middle of the night with the rifles and ammunition that was served out to them. The Hawke's Bay chiefs had forbidden the Government to take arms into the Hawke's Bay District, and it had to be done at night, and so this thing went on until this purchase of the Seventy-mile Bush was to be made, and I, naturally, was the person in the neighbourhood and living in it who was most consulted about it; and the Natives agreed on this condition: that I should take the money myself and divide it among them, according to my estimate of their various claims. That was one of the conditions of the selling, and they tied themselves by a written agreement to accept my decision about the money, and I divided the money and gave it to them, and so completed the purchase. I have only troubled the Committee with this because it seemed rather a bald statement about my purchase of the Seventy-mile Bush. In regard to my transactions with the bank, after I went back into the management, while they were still in possession, the president of the bank and one or two of the other directors asked me to report upon their properties, and say what I thought they had better do.

113. *Mr. O'Meara.*] What properties?—Those up in the north, in Waikato, and other places, their private places, some of them. I said I would do what I could. It appeared to me, however, that what they wanted was an inspector to give a report on some of these properties, instead of taking chance remarks from people in the street; while they had lately thought that they would make a safer arrangement by getting an outside manager to manage in my place. They were now asking me to manage their properties. They were asking me privately to manage the properties of the bank.

114. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] Mr. Hamilton, I first wish to ask you a few questions with regard to some statements in your petition. Now in section 5 you say this: "According to the bank's own valuation—viz., £180,000—which has been supported by the sale to the Government of half the estate for about £90,000, the property was at the time of sale worth £120,000 over and above Captain Hamilton's indebtedness to the bank. Thus, valuation, £180,000; indebtedness, £60,000; balance £120,000." That is your statement?—Yes.

115. How do you assert that: by what reasoning do you assert that half of the estate was sold by the bank to the Government for £90,000?—Well, it was published in the papers.

116. It is not a fact within your own knowledge that two-thirds of the estate was sold for £90,000?—No.

117. What was the original area of the block?—30,750 acres.

118. Or 31,000?—Yes.

119. Say 31,000, and close on 20,000 was sold by the bank to the Government—within a few acres of 20,000. You know the only two interests not sold were two interests of 5,140 acres?—Were there only two interests?

120. With the exception of two interests, Maata Aoewaka and Matiu Meke, and Wikiriwhi Rautahi. Do you not know from your own knowledge that nearly 20,000 acres were sold to the Government?—No.

121. You appeared for the Natives twelve months ago in Dannevirke, in the Native Land Court, when the bank's portion of their freehold was cut off?—You will see it in section 4. I see it says, "After holding the property for a few years (during which time the bank expended nothing on the estate beyond the income derived therefrom), the bank sold to the New Zealand Government a little more than one-half of the area of the same, without the stock, for the sum of £90,000 or thereabouts, which amounts to about £30,000 more than Captain Hamilton owed the bank at the time when the property was sold."

122. No; I am at section 5 of the petition. It was between 19,000 and 20,000 acres, was it not?—It appears to me to be something like 18,330 acres.

123. There were between 19,000 and 20,000; even on your figures you will admit that this petition sent in is not correct when it says that half of the estate was sold for £90,000?—I think it said a little more.

124. I am speaking of section 5. It is the statement made there, viz.: "According to the bank's own valuation, £180,000, which has been supported by the sale to the Government of half the estate for about £90,000," &c.?—Yes; it says so there.

125. Well that would be incorrect?—Yes; it is rather loosely worded.

126. I will produce the orders of the Native Land Court to-morrow in order to satisfy the Committee on this point.

127. *Mr. O'Meara.*] I would like to know whether Mr. Hamilton admits that or not?—It is a loose statement; it is a little over. The exact figures are 31,000 acres as surveyed now.

128. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] 30,750 acres were given this morning?—I am told 31,000. It is nothing, an extra 250 acres, anyhow. There are many discrepancies in these things. There is this