

146. But the average of the whole bush?—About 9d.

147. And the cost of delivery to the railway-station?—Would be a very few pence per 100ft.—perhaps 3d.

148. It would cost 1s. altogether?—Yes.

149. What is your estimated loss between log and sawn timber?—I am not in a position to answer that.

150. But if you have had a long experience in milling you will have an idea of what the usual loss is?—No; I have not had much experience in milling.

151. *Mr. Fraser.*] I want to be perfectly clear on the evidence with regard to the 640 acres, which you go to the Council for: I presume the position is this—that you could not acquire by lease anywhere in that locality land where you could put up your mill?—That is so.

152. The only means by which you could secure a title to the land would be by going to the Council?—Yes.

153. And you propose to do that by taking a lease for twenty-one years over the 640 acres, with all the rights of a lessor upon it?—Yes.

154. From that centre you propose to cut the timber all round?—Yes.

155. Have the negotiations between you and the Natives so far been of an amicable nature?—Yes, very amicable.

156. And, so far as you know, is there generally a consensus of opinion among the Natives that it would be beneficial to themselves?—Yes; they are quite delighted, I may say, with what we propose to do. We undertake to find the capital and brains, and open the bush, and they reap more than a fair share of the profits, as many people admit.

157. What do you estimate the expense will be to place the timber on the railway from your proposed mill? What expenditure will you have to incur first?—Quite £5,000 will have to be expended in the construction of the mill and tramway.

158. *Mr. Mander.*] Is it a wooden tramway?—Yes. If iron rails were used it would be very much greater.

159. *Mr. Herries.*] About this company of yours: is it a *bona fide* company to work the timber?—Yes.

160. Is it registered yet?—Yes.

161. Registered in Wellington?—Yes.

162. Are the directors appointed?—Yes.

163. Who are they?—John Orr, of Johnsonville; William Moore, of Johnsonville; Isabella Moore, of Johnsonville; Te Heuheu Tukino, Native chief, representing the Natives; and myself.

164. Those are only the provisional directors?—Yes.

165. Is the prospectus issued yet to the world in general?—No, not yet.

166. When do you propose to issue the prospectus?—When I am sure of the title and am safe with regard to what I may ask people to take shares in.

167. You are waiting until this legislation happens?—Yes.

168. And you are waiting until you get the 640 acres from the Council?—Yes.

169. You are not getting the timber land in order to sell it to any one else?—No.

170. It is a *bona fide* company which is to be floated?—Yes.

171. With what capital?—£30,000.

172. One-pound shares?—Yes.

173. Of which one-third may be taken up by the Natives?—Yes; one-third of the shares have been applied for by the Natives.

174. It is not compulsory on the part of the Natives to take up shares?—No; but they have applied for the whole number. We wished to exclude them, because it would be more favourable to us from the European point of view, but their representative insisted upon them being included to make it what he called a Maori company.

175. And supposing the legislation does not pass, and you get your title to this 640 acres, are you sanguine about floating the company?—Yes.

176. Have you received offers to take up sufficient shares to make it all right?—Yes; my family and Mr. Orr can take up sufficient shares to float the company.

177. And everything is awaiting the decision of the Legislature?—Yes.

178. You have read this clause 31?—Yes.

179. Have you any objection to taking your deeds before the Native Land Council for the whole block—not the 640 acres, but the 6,000 acres?—No; that is what I would like to do. I would like to take the whole block before the Council if the Council would ratify the transaction.

180. But the clause says they can ratify or modify?—Yes. “Modify” may mean anything.

181. You consider that it is an unfair thing to ask you to do that?—Yes.

182. Are the Natives willing to put the whole block into the hands of the Council?—Yes.

183. They have no objection?—They would prefer otherwise, but they are willing to do it.

184. They prefer to deal with you direct rather than through the intermediary of the Council?—Yes, because they think their royalties will not come out so well through the Council.

185. But, still, if clause 31 were passed there would be no difficulty on the part of the Natives to put their land through the Council?—The difficulty would be this: the Council could not grant us more than 640 acres.

186. Do you anticipate that?—Yes.

187. On good grounds?—I am legally advised that the Council is governed by the Land for Settlements Act, and cannot grant more than 640 acres to any one.

188. You have been advised to that effect?—Yes.

189. And it would be impossible, if that advice is correct, to give a lease for more than 640 acres?—Yes, if the advice is good.