

after spending your time and money on it. If the Crown has power to cancel that lease do you think compensation should be given?—Yes.

144. If compensation is to be paid, your opinion is that it ought to be paid over to either one or the other?—Yes.

145. And granting you a small area would not enable you to work it satisfactory?—Yes, and probably the people would not put a shilling into it.

146. How far down is the coal?—300 ft.

147. You would have to take a shaft down 300 ft?—Yes.

148. And you have to go down that depth perhaps for 100 acres, if coal-bearing?—Yes.

149. You have prospected this ground and spent money on it, and this lease is given over your heads—the compensation ought to be given to the Taupiri Company?—Yes.

150. You do not want any compensation—you want the ground?—Yes.

151. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] You are aware that the company was notified of the subdivision of the 230 acres?—Yes, decidedly.

152. Did you protest?—Yes, I protested at a meeting of the Land Board. I told them I would take it to the House.

153. Did you write to the Minister of Lands and protest?—He has a petition from us.

154. But at the time—this was in January last?—We wrote to the Minister.

155. Were you aware of this proposed subdivision, and did you then object?—Yes. We told them we had prior application to the whole area.

156. To whom did you tell that?—To the Mines Department. It is in the correspondence. It was sent to the Commissioner. He wrote us in regard to the lithograph tracing, and we informed him that we still adhered to our former application. Mr. Mueller wrote to us and we replied.

157. That was before the Waste Lands Board dealt with it?—

158. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Did you inform the Mines Department that you intended to interview the House and petition against this?—Yes, I interviewed Mr. McGowan twelve months ago. There was a letter of the 19th May, 1904, in regard to the matter.

159. Have you got any idea what was stated in that letter?—We stated then to the Commissioner that having prospected and found coal he could not consider any other applicant in the matter, and we therefore adhered to our former application.

160. Did you intimate to the Mines Department that you intended to petition the House unless justice was done to you in the matter?—We had done so before this.

161. Was it verbal or in writing?—I interviewed Mr. McGowan and showed him the petition we intended to present.

162. And in face of that the Mines Department issues a lease for 230 acres?—Yes.

163. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] I think you interviewed me twelve months ago?—Yes.

164. What was the object?—We wanted what we claimed as our rights as regards the whole area of this lake.

165. And why did you come down in order to get that if you had made application in accordance with the law?—Because Mr. Mueller said there were two other applicants in for the same area.

166. Were they in before or after you?—We had protection and they were put in while we were protected.

167. Is it not a fact that the Taupiri Company tried for the whole area last year?—They got an application in after much pressure.

168. Did you not come to me to object to their application?—Yes.

169. And from the result of your coming to me did you not make application for the area according to law?—You know they had the application in.

170. And their application was in order as far as you know?—I have nothing to do with that.

171. Were you or were they in advance?—We were in advance.

172. Was your rent paid in advance before them?—We were in advance.

173. If you had your rent paid and your application in first you would have got the grant?—It seems not.

174. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] With regard to your interview with the Minister of Mines, did you tell the Minister of Mines that you intended to petition Parliament if you did not get justice?—Yes.

175. And in the face of that, as soon as Parliament met the Minister issued a lease for the property which you thought you had protected?—Yes.

176. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] How much coal land has the Taupiri Company got in that district?—Freehold and leasehold, the principals have about 10,000 acres in the Huntly District.