

3. I mean the 7,000 acres?—No; I want the bushfellers for a different property.
4. Who were your solicitors when you purchased the leases?—I have a good many transactions with solicitors. I deal with them all in Wellington.
5. You give them all a turn?—I have a good many transactions.
6. Who were your solicitors when you purchased the leases?—I bought the property through Mr. Campbell, of Travers, Campbell, and Peacock.
7. He was acting as your solicitor, as well as solicitor for the sellers?—At that time. In fact, I purchased the property on his recommendation.
8. Who were your solicitors when you made the first sale to Mr. Chambers?—I generally do these things "on my own." I have had a good deal of experience.
9. You had no one acting for you?—No. I dealt with those people directly.
10. What was the date of that first sale, to Chambers, McLean, and Price?—The agreement was signed on the 19th May, 1908.
11. By whom was the agreement prepared?—By Carlile, McLean, and Wood, of Napier.
12. Where did you sign it?—Mr. McLean himself came down with me. He was on the same train, and he completed the matter in Wellington. He lodged the letter here with Moorhouse and Hadfield.
13. You signed it there?—I would not say that. I do not remember where I signed it.
14. Was any firm of solicitors acting for you then with regard to this business?—No, I had no solicitors.
15. You got the £700? That was paid in cash to you?—Yes, Mr. Chambers handed me the cheque on the station at Hastings.
16. At what date did the action take place in the Supreme Court for the removal of Jones's caveat?—I think it was in July, 1908.
17. Who was acting for you then?—Mr. Charles Tringham.
18. Why did you change your solicitor and go to Mr. Dalziell in August?—I deal, as I said, with many lawyers. I have several even now in Wellington. I am dealing with four different firms at this very juncture.
19. Did you employ Mr. Tringham in this case concerning the removal of the caveat from this block?—No.
20. Were you dissatisfied with his conduct?—No. Mr. Tringham had engaged Mr. Skerrett, I think. When the matter was before the Court of Appeal it was Charles Tringham and C. P. Skerrett.
21. What made you go to Findlay, Dalziell, and Co.?—I had some other transactions with them at that time. I had some dealings with Francis Grace at the time the matter came up.
22. And you put the matters into Mr. Dalziell's hands altogether?—No, not altogether. I just mentioned the matter to him at the time—after the Appeal Court sitting.
23. And did he carry it through for you?—Mr. Dalziell had acted for me years before that, in many transactions.
24. It seems rather an extraordinary thing that you should employ Mr. Tringham in one part of the case, and then Mr. Dalziell?—Not at all. Mr. Dalziell was solicitor for me, for instance, when I formed the Empire Hotel into a company, and in many other transactions.
25. You went to Mr. Dalziell in August—on the 3rd August?—I had dealings with Mr. Dalziell at that time. I do not recollect the exact date.
26. He has given us the date. That was the first time he had anything to do with the Mokau Block?—Yes. It was after the Appeal Court decision.
27. You brought the question up when you were seeing Mr. Dalziell?—I do not remember exactly.
28. Were you at that time thinking of buying the freehold from the Natives?—No, it never entered my mind then. I had sold the lease, as I stated before, to these Hawke's Bay people, and completed the transaction.
29. When was it that you first had the idea of buying from the Natives?—I think it was Pepene Eketone, who came to Wellington at the end of 1908—I think that is the time the matter of selling came up.
30. Did they approach you?—Yes, they came here then.
31. You did not seek them?—It never entered my mind at the time.
32. At that time what was the price they were asking?—At that time the freehold could have been bought for £15,000.
33. Why did you not buy at that price?—They could not sell—there were so many interested.
34. You mean that Pepene was only acting for a certain portion of the Natives?—I do not know about a certain portion. That is what they agreed to accept.
35. Why did you not buy?—Three Natives at that time signed a paper. I think I have it somewhere at home. They wanted to sell for £15,000, subject to the approval of the other Natives. It had to be approved by the others.
36. And the others did not approve?—I do not know. Certain other matters came up at that time.
37. Did you consult Mr. Dalziell about buying the freehold at that time—when they offered you the freehold for £15,000?—It was some time afterwards.
38. Had you any doubt about the validity of your leases?—No, I never doubted them, because English people had lent £17,500 on them. The English mortgagees alone had that much owing on them.
39. Did the Government ever try to buy out your interests?—The matter came before the Government, I think, about two years and a half ago. We offered to sell the whole lot, I think, to the Government.