

122. Was it before the visit you have described, or after?—It must have been after.
123. Before you went back to Te Kuiti?—No, after I had come back to Te Kuiti: quite recently.
124. Can you give us the date?—It must have been about a month ago. I saw Mr. Loughnan about a month ago.
125. Did you discuss matters connected with these blocks?—Generally, yes.
126. Were any other arrangements made?—Not so far as I know.
127. *Hon. Sir J. Carroll.*] Going back to the commencement of your relation with this case: the Natives went to you at Te Kuiti in consequence of a general report that there were proposals to buy the Mokau-Mohakatino Block?—Yes.
128. And they asked you to assist them?—Yes.
129. You undertook to assist them?—Yes.
130. You came to Wellington and interviewed Mr. Bell?—I did.
131. In company with Mr. Macdonald?—Yes.
132. You did not know at that time the number of owners you represented?—No: we had to go to Mokau to find out. I can only speak for those who were present. There were four Natives and Mr. Macdonald.
133. When you interviewed Mr. Bell how did you put the case to him—that on behalf of certain Native owners you were opposing the sale, or that you disputed the title?—It arose in this way: at the first meeting at Te Kuiti Mr. Macdonald had the printed report of Mr. Bell and the report of the Native Land Commission, and he gave that to me to read.
134. Then Mr. Macdonald had, previously to that, obtained a legal opinion from Mr. Bell as to the title of the Mokau-Mohakatino blocks?—Yes.
135. Then the question resolved itself into this at the interview, that steps should be taken to provide ammunition for contesting the titles of those blocks?—That was the position.
136. The question of sale was left on one side?—That followed later on: but I had no specific instructions to deal with that—to oppose it.
137. Then Mr. Bell agreed to undertake the case?—Yes.
138. And he asked for £100 to be paid down?—Yes.
139. Mr. Bell further suggested that a fund of £800 should be subscribed?—Yes.
140. To carry on the litigation necessary?—Yes. But he said there might be more needed—perhaps a couple of thousand pounds—if the case went to the Privy Council.
141. In the meantime with that £100 he would take steps on behalf of the Natives to prevent anything being done at these meetings referred to?—He did not say so in those words, but that was understood, I presume.
142. He was aware that a meeting of assembled owners was to be called to discuss the proposals for the sale?—Yes. He said he would notify the Board that he would be present at the meeting, or something to that effect.
143. Did he give you to understand that he would be there?—Yes, he said he would most probably be there. That relieved me of any anxiety in that respect.
144. That £100 that you paid—was he satisfied that that would be sufficient to take him to Te Kuiti and back, or did he say anything?—No, he did not say that. I took that to be my part. He said that the cost of printing all the documents—perhaps several times over—and engaging people to go through all the titles and get three or four copies of them, would fully cover the £100. But if you wish to ascertain really how far that £100 went, I have his account here made up to the 31st March, and I can put it in. On the 26th January Messrs. Roy and Nicholson put in their charge of £46 19s. for their part of the business, and on the 29th March this account of Messrs. Bell, Gully, Bell, and Myers was made out, with £100 taken off, and £21 12s. 4d. shown as due, which I paid.
145. So Mr. Bell has received £120-odd?—£121 12s. 4d.
146. Was it intended that the £100 should cover Mr. Bell's expenses to Te Kuiti, to be present at this meeting?—No, it could not possibly mean that, because he said he would be a costly man to move. I said that I understood that a big gun required a big charge. I asked him not to incur too much expense.
147. Mr. Bell stated in his evidence that he could have gone to Te Kuiti and back easily within that £100: "He had funds in hand out of the £100 to pay for his visit to Te Kuiti." However, you account for the disbursement of that £100 by the bill which you refer to. Right up to the last telegram you received from Mr. Bell as to his attendance there, you and the Natives you represented fully expected him to be present?—Yes.
148. And desired his presence?—Certainly, I desired his presence very much—in fact, I was expecting a telegram asking me to send him £25 or £50, and I was prepared to advance that money if it had been necessary. As a contribution towards the expenses, as I have said, I sent Mr. Macdonald £5, so that he should have no excuse for not coming.
149. Did Mr. Bell, in your interviews with him, declare that it was absolutely necessary the Natives should have legal assistance and advice during these meetings?—No. He was engaged only *pro re nata*—only according to the circumstance arising. I made no provision for other expenses.
150. With regard to the titles to the different Mokau blocks: did Mr. Bell make it clear that one of the blocks was in his opinion assailable?—He did. Through much conversation with Macdonald and Damon I have no doubt that my views were transferred to the Natives. I had no communication with the Natives directly, because I do not speak Maori. Macdonald was present during the whole of the conversation with Mr. Bell and knew the position exactly, and, as far as I was able to judge, whenever the Natives were present Macdonald was most careful to impress every point upon them.