

224. Are you a licensed interpreter?—No.

225. A J.P.?—No.

226. Was Tuiti Macdonald also instrumental in obtaining signatures to the warrants?—Yes.

227. During what period were you and the other members of the committee engaged in obtaining these signatures?—Right up till the 11th March. They were in my hands till the 6th March. I see that the last one actually signed in my presence was on the 11th February, and the last one was the 6th March. This is witnessed by somebody down at New Plymouth.

228. *The Chairman.*] Who witnessed that signature at New Plymouth?—Kingi Tahiwī. I do not know the gentleman at all.

229. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] Were any of these expenses, incurred in connection with the signatures to the warrants to sue, paid by Mr. Bell's firm?—No.

230. They do not form part of the bill of costs rendered by that firm?—Not at all.

231. The expenses incurred in obtaining these signatures have been charged to the committee?—No.

232. They are in the accounts rendered here in this book?—No, they have not been charged to the committee, because we have not really had a final committee meeting with regard to them.

233. They have been presented: there are some here?—Yes, part of them.

234. There is Damon's, for instance, and Aterea's?—Yes.

235. With regard to the proxies for the meetings of assembled owners, were those obtained by Mr. Damon and the others?—Mr. Damon and Tuiti Macdonald got those.

236. At the same time as they were obtaining signatures to the other documents?—I do not know when they got the proxies. That part of the business I did not interfere with.

237. Is Aterea a large owner in these blocks?—Yes, he and his family are very large owners. You will see their names occurring perhaps twenty times in the list of owners at the back of that book.

238. Have you any idea what interests Aterea Ahiwaka would represent?—I cannot tell you at the moment, but I could very soon find out. I know they are very large. Aterea has been a member of the committee, and a most straightforward, honourable man he has been.

239. In fact, he is the principal owner in the Mokau Block?—He is the man one word from whom decided practically the lot—he and Paeroroku, of Otaki, who represented nine shares.

240. But in this account that you rendered—did you render this account?—I did not render it. The matter was mentioned when we were all together.

241. Without going into the items, the committee summarizes?—The committee did not do anything. That is only my own memoranda there. I sent it to Mr. Bowler, so that when he was paying the Natives he might see that I had a claim against them.

242. According to the memoranda you advanced to members of the committee cash to the amount of £157 4s. 5d.?—I have advanced more than that to date. At that time that was the state of affairs.

243. "Out-of-pocket expenses, £66 1s. 9d."?—Yes. That did not include anything like the out-of-pocket expenses, because I have not included rent paid for offices, &c.

244. I am quoting the summary that appears here: "Out-of-pocket expenses, £66 1s. 9d."; then, for your own services, you claim £1 1s. a day for ninety days?—When we first started at Mokau the Natives signed a document in which they appointed me the only paid officer of the lot. They agreed to give me £1 1s. a day, in addition to out-of-pocket expenses, as long as I continued to act as their agent. Well, they never paid me anything.

245. You claim for ninety days: £1 1s. a day equals £94 10s., and this, with the other items, make a total of £317 16s. 2d. up to the 4th April?—It was only a rough way of getting at a rough idea of what our expenses would come to.

246. Could you make that account up so as to indicate to the Committee what proportion of the £317 would be fairly chargeable as costs in connection with the Supreme Court action, and what proportion as costs in connection with the negotiations for the sale?—I do not think so. For instance, a sum of money was paid to Paeroroku and Tauhia for what they said were their out-of-pocket expenses in coming to Te Kuiti. I did not question those. They asked for the money; they had no money of their own; and I helped them in every way I could.

247. The first meeting that was held at Mokau on your return from Wellington, was that in connection with the sale, or in furtherance of the scheme outlined to you by Mr. Bell?—In furtherance of the serving of the writ. A general discussion took place upon matters connected with Mokau.

248. But more particularly in connection with the issue of the writ?—The whole circumstances were explained to the Natives.

249. We had it from Tuiti Macdonald that one of the chief objects of that meeting was to raise funds—to raise a fighting fund of £800?—Certainly it was. I am leaving out the matter of costs altogether.

250. Did you know, prior to this meeting at Mokau, that proceedings were pending before the Maori Land Board?—I knew that application had been made to the Native Land Court for partition, because I put it in myself.

251. I am speaking of your visit to Mokau after your return from Wellington. This was after the 6th January—after the first meeting of assembled owners?—Yes.

252. When you visited Mokau after your return from Wellington, was that visit in connection with the negotiations for the sale, or in connection with the proceedings in the Supreme Court?—In connection, first of all, with the writ, and, I suppose, that incidentally the question of the sale was mentioned. But as I did not speak Maori I do not know what the discussion was about. I only got a *résumé* afterwards of what took place. The question of raising funds, of course, was a most important one, and they discussed that among themselves.