

there is a deficiency it will have to be made good by the Natives. To take the money from the Natives and hold it was the only way in which that money could be got, because it will never be possible to get it out of every individual.

184. This £1,000 is intended to be in addition to the 10 per cent. fund which is being collected?—No, it is apart from that. Only any contribution which the Natives may make of their own free will will go towards that amount. The £1,000 and whatever the Natives pay will be put together against the whole of the expenses, and we shall only ask—at least, that will be my advice—for such an amount of that as is necessary to fulfil obligations.

185. If you happen to be able to collect the whole of the 10 per cent. you will have practically £3,500 for the purpose of paying expenses?—No. Our share of that would be less than 4 per cent.

186. What do you mean by “our share”?—The share of the Natives on my side. We shall not want, as far as I can see how, more than about £630.

187. Still, so far as it is possible for any one to see, you are endeavouring to collect £3,500 for the purpose of paying expenses?—Not at all. I am only endeavouring to collect the amount that is due to us.

188. You have got the £1,000?—Yes.

189. And you have got the 10 per cent.?—No, we have not.

190. Who has got it?—I do not know. I refused to have anything to do with that.

191. You know that an attempt is being made to collect it?—Yes, but not with my sanction.

192. Up to the present £1,500 has been collected?—Yes, I know that.

193. Do you wish the Committee to understand that the Natives had no alternative between selling and going on with what would probably be an expensive lawsuit?—I suppose they could have devised some other means, but I do not know of any. They could sell to another party; but I do not think the Maori Land Board countenance that sort of thing.

194. Do you not think it was possible to sell to the Government?—I do not know anything about the Government.

195. You are an experienced man in these matters, and you are called to give evidence. Do you not think it was possible for the Natives to have sold to the Government?—Not directly, because the leases had not been proved invalid.

196. Were you not aware of negotiations going on between the Government and the Natives with regard to the purchase of this block?—I did not know anything about that at all.

197. Did you never hear that a gentleman up there had actually claimed £1,000 commission on account of the sale of this block to the Government by the Natives?—I did not know anything about it.

198. Coming back to the alternatives, would it not have been possible for the Natives to continue to hold their land, draw the rentals from the owners of the leases, whoever they might be, and insist upon the covenants in the leases being complied with?—They could not insist upon those covenants being complied with until they had put the matter through the Court, and the rent they were getting would not pay for their travelling-expenses.

199. Is it not a fact that some of these Natives are wealthy men?—No, not one of them has appeared to me to be a wealthy man, because they have all borrowed money.

200. What about Andrew Eketone?—He has nothing to do with me at all.

201. But is he not an owner?—No, I do not think he is.

202. Is Pepene Eketone an owner?—No. His wife is.

203. And he is supposed to be a wealthy man, is he not?—I know nothing about his affairs.

204. Still, you admit there was another alternative to selling?—I do not.

205. It is not evident to you?—No, you have not made it evident so far.

206. This Mr. White to whom you referred yesterday: is he a shareholder in the company?—I do not know whether his name appeared. I rather think it did.

207. Is he not a broker by calling?—No. He is one of the firm of David White and Co. (Limited), land agents.

208. Did he visit Te Kuiti in connection with the proposed purchase of this block by Mr. Lewis or the company?—I told you that in February he visited Te Kuiti and laid the proposal before me. He did not know at that time that I had anything to do with this affair, and it came as a shock to him when he found that I was connected with it.

209. Being connected with it, you would know that the gentleman who was endeavouring to purchase the property was Mr. Lewis?—I did not need to get that from him, because it had appeared in the *Gazette* months before.

210. Why did you not go to Mr. Herrman Lewis instead of coming down to Palmerston to see the solicitor of the company?—It was not my business to go to Mr. Lewis. I did not know him at all.

211. *The Chairman.*] You were dealing with him?—No.

212. *Mr. Massey.*] I do not quite understand. Mr. Lewis was the gentleman for whom Mr. Dalziel was acting. There was no suggestion of a company at that time, and I cannot understand how it was that you went over the head of Mr. Dalziel and Mr. Lewis and went to outside people in Palmerston and made an arrangement with them?—I could only deal with those people with whom I was associated by reason of the fact that Mr. White had called upon me and laid the matter before me. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Dalziel were not in it. Mr. Dalziel only came into it afterwards. At that time the only man I knew in that connection was Mr. Loughnan.

213. You say that Mr. Lewis was not in it, yet you told us just now that you had seen his name in the *Gazette* as the suggested purchaser?—Yes.

214. You rather doubted, I think, a statement made yesterday that Tuiti Macdonald had stated that 75 per cent. of the owners were opposed to the sale?—I did not say 75 per cent. of the owners: I said 75 per cent. of the shares owned by the owners.