

before the Natives in any transactions with the intermediate buyers in coming to any settlement. We issued no authority to any person to represent us.

17. Have you got the prospectus of the company or the articles of association?—I have the form, but not the one that is registered. This is a copy of the memorandum of association. [Document produced.] It being a private company, there was no prospectus.

18. Do you certify that this is a correct copy?—It is a carbon copy of the original. I want to hand in now a list of the shareholders to-day. It is signed by the secretary. It shows the contributing shares and the fully-paid-up ones in parallel columns. [Document handed in.] The document showing the original signatories is filed. In coming away I did not get a copy. I can get it if desired.

19. *The Chairman.*] Is that all the statement you wish to make?—Yes.

20. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] You have not inspected all this land yourself, have you?—No. I was once at the Mokau, but did not think then that I should have the interest which I have now.

21. Were you ever approached by any of the Natives, or any person purporting to act for them, during the negotiations prior to the company acquiring these options?—No, I never saw or heard of them.

22. Did you meet a Mr. Hardy?—No. I may have met him, but I do not know him by sight. I have met no one, excepting the agents, that I can recall.

23. Did you have any direct communication with Mr. Lewis?—No; I only met him once in my life, after the sale was over. We came down in the train together.

24. Was that in March?—Yes, I think it would be about March.

25. What sale do you mean?—I mean, after we had bought the property.

26. That was after the freehold was acquired from the Natives?—Yes. In the meetings that took place between Mr. Mason Chambers and Mr. Herrman Lewis in Palmerston North I had no interest.

27. The man that the company was dealing with all this time was Mr. Mason Chambers?—Yes.

28. You had nothing to do directly with Mr. Herrman Lewis?—No. Only with Mr. Mason Chambers and Mr. Fraser. The company bought the other part—the mine—from him (Mr. Fraser).

29. Do you know anything about this payment of £2,500 in shares to the Natives?—I heard them refer to it. I understood it was something that cropped up after the vendors had made their calculations with us, and I heard of them complaining that they had to pay it. We did not pay it; the vendors found it. It is only in that connection that I heard about it.

30. In arriving at the value of £81,000 for the freehold of the Mokau-Mohakatino Block, apart from the Mangapapa Block, how was the company guided?—£85,000 was the amount; £4,000 was added on afterwards. Mr. Mason Chambers was over the ground himself, and he had with him Mr. J. A. Fraser, who had no interest in the Mokau-Mohakatino Block. He is an expert bushman, and his capacity for valuing properties is considered very good. Mr. Mason Chambers, of course, is a practical man too. It was more Mr. Mason Chambers's own views on the value of the land that influenced me. I do not know, of course, about the others. I only came to be chairman because I happened to be living at the place where the company's office was.

31. Are you quite sure that the shares which the Natives hold include an interest in the mine?—Oh, yes. They are shares in the company. If they do not include an interest in the mine, then my own shares do not. We paid £45,000 for the mine and the other interests around the mine. There is a lease over 1,400 acres.

32. *Mr. Massey.*] It is a leasehold interest?—Yes.

33. *Mr. Seddon.*] Did you at any time approach any member of the Government about the purchase of this block?—No, I never mentioned it until I asked them when the Committee was going to be set up.

34. You never saw the Native Minister about it?—No.

35. You have seen the newspaper references to your connection with this block?—Yes.

36. And to your leasehold proclivities?—Yes.

37. What inference did you draw?—The inference that was conveyed to me by people reading it and coming and asking me questions was that by some means that I should not be proud of I had brought about a condition of things under which I held a property that was going to return me a large profit; and that, as I had been formerly a colleague of the two gentlemen mentioned, that relationship had enabled it to be done.

38. That was the inference that you drew from it?—No; that was the inference the public were drawing and speaking to me about.

39. You never said at any time that a freehold tenure was one that a person should not acquire?—No. My own land is held on freehold tenure.

40. *Mr. Herries.*] You say that the company purchased only 46,000 acres?—Yes.

41. You are aware that there was more than that purchased from the Natives?—I see by the papers that there was more than that.

42. Do you know what became of the balance?—In the original Mokau Jones Block there are a number of sections, I see by the map, that have tenants in possession of them. We did not get any of these. They are not included in our purchase.

43. Was there any agreement that any land should be left in the hands of the vendor, Mr. Herrman Lewis?—I only know that document—the agreement with Mr. Mason Chambers. I did not follow the thing up any further.

44. I see there are some mortgages paid off with this £85,000—mortgages for £44,221. Have you any knowledge of what those mortgages were?—Only to this extent: that the Mokau Jones interests having come into the hands of Mr. Herrman Lewis, and Mr. Lewis having obtained money on them and then having disposed of these interests to Mr. Mason Chambers, who disposed of them to us, solicitors representing all the parties concerned came together, and the whole of