

168. *Mr. Massey.*] In regard to the value of the land, do you know that the present company has practically paid £85,000 for 46,000 acres?—Yes, I heard so. I saw it in the papers last night. That was the first I heard of it.

169. Do you think that is the approximate value?—I think it is a big price, but we have different opinions.

170. You know all the Natives who are interested in the Mokau Block—you know a lot of them personally?—Yes, all the Mokau and a lot of Te Kuiti Natives.

171. Have most of them got other lands left besides the lands recently sold?—I think so.

172. I think you said that your wife's father had not signed the lease and that there were others in the same position?—Te Oro Watihi is an uncle of my wife's, and she succeeded to the share of an elder brother of Te Oro.

173. Did those Native owners consider they were entitled, not having signed the lease and not consented to the sale, that they were entitled to have their shares cut out?—Yes.

174. That is the position they take up?—Yes.

175. And naturally consider it a hardship when they never consented to the sale to be left landless?—Yes, certainly.

176. *Hon. Sir J. Carroll.*] They had other lands?—I think most of them had got other lands.

177. *Mr. Massey.*] You know the country well, do you not?—Yes.

178. You know where the railway-station is intended to be placed on the new railway-line that is being constructed from the Stratford to Ongarue?—No.

179. Do you know the nearest point on the line to the block?—I do not.

180. You are not in a position to say what the distance is approximately?—No; it is very hard to guess a thing like that.

TE ORO WATIHI SWORN and examined. (No. 13.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Where do you live?—At Tongaporutu.

2. Have you any knowledge of the paper which has been circulated in regard to the Mokau-Mohakatino Block?—Yes, I have seen it.

3. You have been summoned by Mr. Massey to appear before the Committee, and do you wish to make a statement or subject yourself to examination by Mr. Massey?—I will make a statement. The first statement I have to make is in regard to Pepene going to look into the trouble in connection with this Mokau-Mohakatino Block.

4. What date was that?—I do not know. When they came to Wellington the only result that was reached by them was sale, and I received a wire at Tongaporutu from Wellington sent by Takerei Kingi Wetere, of Waitara, to the effect that the best thing would be to sell, and I replied that I am not willing to sell.

5. What transpired after that?—Then Ngia Aterea opposed the sale and he was represented by Tuiti Macdonald, and they asked us, the Maori owners of the land, what were our wishes and what position we took up, and we, the owners, replied that it was much better for us to hold our land than to sell it. Tuiti said "Yes, it certainly would be much better that you should hold on to your land and not sell it." Tuiti's companions were Hardy, a European from Te Kuiti, and Tuhata (Mr. Damon), a member of the Te Atiawa Tribe. Tuiti then said, "All you people, the owners of this land, should sign a document to the effect that you intend to hold the land, and we signed to the effect that we would hold the land. Having signed the document to the effect that we intended to hold the land in our possession, we then signed another document to the effect that we were prepared to hand over for sale 800 acres of land to pay off the liabilities upon the Mokau-Mohakatino Block, the costs of the action, liabilities on the land, and payment for the agents, Tuiti and others. We signed that document also, and those were the two separate occasions on which we signed.

6. *Mr. Massey.*] Are you a large owner, or were you a large owner, in the block?—Yes.

7. Can you give us any idea of the area of your interest in proportion to the whole of the block?—I cannot say. I can give you the boundary.

8. Are you interested in the whole of the four blocks, or only one of them?—I know nothing about blocks or subdivisions, but I can say that I and others own the land from the coast up to Mangapohue and as far as Panirau. That is where my interest ceases.

9. Where did it start?—From the coast.

10. What distance is there from the coast up to Panirau?—I could not say how many miles it may be.

11. Well, you are quite clear that you were one of the largest owners?—I am absolutely correct in what I say—my ancestors are buried there.

12. Do you think you are the largest owner in the block?—I am.

13. You have not consented to the sale?—I have not.

14. And you have not received the money?—No, none.

15. Was there any sum of money offered to you?—No.

16. Were you never informed as to the amount of money you were entitled to receive if you agreed to the sale?—No one, either European or any other nationality, ever approached me and said, "There is so-much money for you," mentioning any particular sum, "if you agree to the sale."

17. *The Chairman.*] Were you present at the meeting at the Maori kainga at Mokau at which Mr. Hardy was present?—Yes, I called that meeting for the purpose of signing the document to hold the land.

18. *Mr. Massey.*] Were there many other owners opposed to the sale in the same way as yourself?—All the coast people were opposed to the sale.