

Mr. Adam Porter.
1st Sept., 1875.

396. You stated that there had been a lawsuit. Has the point been decided whether the issue before the proper time was a legal issue?—There have been two lawsuits, but no judgment has been given on that point. There was one case of Blake *versus* the Pai o Hauraki, where the plaintiffs claim the ground by these rights, no matter how they got them. The Court has not given judgment upon it.

397. Was it known upon the field that O'Halloran had been the means of supplying the rights?—Everybody had their own surmise. The impression was that they could come in no other way than through O'Halloran, Mackay, and Brissenden. The reason that got wind at first was that it was known which booth the rights came from. One booth had from 1 to 75, and another from 76 to 150, and so on.

398. It was believed that those miners' rights which were to have pegged out the whole hill, in the way you have described, were amongst those which Mr. Mackay had in charge?—Yes.

399. *Sir G. Grey.*] Has Crippen any shares in the Mazeppa?—No; none.

400. Or Guilding?—No, nor Guilding—none in their own names, at all events.

401. *Mr. T. L. Shepherd.*] You stated that there were thirteen pegs at one place and nine at another. They did not all claim under rights issued prior to the opening?—There were three parties when the prospecting claim was pegged off. Everybody got as near as possible to it. All these pegs did not represent exactly the same ground. There were overlaps and corners taken in. At the lower end there were thirteen pegs, and at the upper nine. That was in the clear ground. Down in the bush was a mass of bush.

402. You pegged out in two ways—at 10, and afterwards when the first rights were on the ground?—Yes.

403. But others did the same thing as you did?—I do not know. All the parties withdrew but the three which afterwards amalgamated.

404. *Sir G. Grey.*] Who were the three parties?—Payne and party, Howard and party, and Riordan and party.

405. *Mr. T. L. Shepherd.*] Did they all get their rights improperly, as you believe?—

406. *The Chairman.*] I think you stated there were twenty of you. I see only twelve names to the petition?—Some of the men were away when I left, and I could not get their signatures. I hold three interests myself. Some of the men were at Tairua and elsewhere.

407. Why do you hold the colony responsible for the damage you have sustained?—Because I believe the damage was received at the hands of colonial officers.

408. Will you explain how?—The gold field, when opened, was under the management of the General Government; if it had been under the management of the Provincial Government, I would have petitioned the Provincial Council.

409. Why do you hold any Government responsible?—I believe every Government is responsible if, through the carelessness or negligence of their servants, loss or damage is sustained by any of the inhabitants.

410. If a servant commits a fraudulent or criminal act, do you think the Government is responsible?—I do to a certain extent. If it were proved who did this, I would take criminal proceedings against him.

411. What officer of the Government did this wrong?—I cannot say positively. I believe, so far as I have been able to find out, Messrs. Mackay, O'Halloran, and Brissenden.

412. Do you mean to say that the whole of these three did the wrong or one of them?—My own impression is that one could not do it without the others.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1875.

Inspector THOMSON, A.C., examined on oath.

*Inspector Thom-
son, A.C.*
15th Sept., 1875.

413. *The Chairman.*] What is your name?—John Bell Thomson.

414. And your occupation?—I am an Inspector of the New Zealand Armed Constabulary.

415. Do you know anything in connection with the alleged illegal issue of miners' rights at Ohinemuri in March last?—Yes.

416. Will you tell the Committee what you know?—Yes. In the latter part of May last I received instructions from the Hon. Major Atkinson, through the head of my department (the Commissioner of Armed Constabulary), to place my services at the disposal of Major Keddell, and to assist him in conducting an inquiry into the alleged improper issue of miners' rights at Ohinemuri. We proceeded to the Thames on the 1st June, and for some two or three weeks afterwards were engaged at the Thames and Ohinemuri endeavouring to collect evidence. After getting as much evidence as was forthcoming just then at the Thames and Ohinemuri, Major Keddell informed me that he proposed to go up to Hokianga to examine Mr. Brissenden, who, we understood, was engaged in making important land purchases. We went there, saw Mr. Brissenden, took his statement (or as much as he volunteered at the time), and returned to Auckland. On the day following our arrival in Auckland, Major Keddell proceeded to the Thames by himself. I had official duties which kept me in Auckland for a few days. During the few days in which he was at the Thames alone—before I joined him—I believe he examined Warden Fraser and one or two other Government officials. Then I joined him at the Thames, and remained with him. By this time the period mentioned in the Commission had expired—it expired on the 10th July. I remained with him until he sent in his report, and since then I have had nothing further to do with it. I have had no communication from the head of my department on the subject until I got the Speaker's order to attend this Committee.

417. Do you know anything of the matter personally?—No, I do not. I had no connection with it until I was ordered by the Government to assist Major Keddell. The matter was quite foreign to me up to that time.

418. *Sir G. Grey.*] Do you know anything of a man named Patrick Dillon?—I do. He was examined by Major Keddell at Ohinemuri, and is now a passenger by the steamer "Hawea," which is on her way to Wellington.