

39. Then he must have meant he would take it from the Natives?—He must have meant from the Natives, not from the Government; but I think he left that question to a certain extent open. The Committee understand that any question of paying money through this case involved the disqualification of Mr. Sutton, of course.

40. *The Chairman.*] I understand all you did would be subject to the revision of the House?—No doubt; but Government would, if the offer had been accepted, have proposed it to the House with all the strength of the Government.

41. *Captain Russell.*] I think there is a question that has not come out yet. On what ground did you think Mr. Sutton would take so much less than the value of the land?—From certain circumstances which I pointed out yesterday, it seemed not improbable that the Maoris were right in their contention that they had signed the deed of conveyance without knowing it included the 163 acres, and, at any rate, there was the fact that the Maoris had for years, and were then, in what was really hostile possession of the land, although possibly not hostile possession in the eyes of the law. These facts rendered the land of less value to Mr. Sutton than it would have been under ordinary circumstances.

42. You said that some of the grantees were supposed to have signed away the land without knowing they were doing so?—I said I supposed that was their contention.

43. Their contention? Are you aware how many grantees there were?—I should not like to say without reference to documents, but they are easily procurable.

44. I ask that question because I believe there were only two. I understand neither of the petitioners are concerned in any way in the grant. Do you know if that is the case?—I think that is the case. I should not like to say positively without having the deed before me.

45. Are you not aware the case was tried before the Supreme Court, and subsequently went before the Court of Appeal, and that the decision was that one of the Natives undoubtedly knew what he was doing, and that there was no evidence to show the other did not?—That might have been the impression left by the evidence. That might have been the evidence.

46. Was that the verdict?—The verdict was not that, that I am aware of

47. Supposing such to have been the verdict, would it not be natural Mr. Sutton should think he had a fair right to hold the land's full value?—It might be natural, whether that was the case or not.

48. *Sir G. Grey.*] Are you aware whether there was any promise of a reserve being made for the Natives when this land was bought?—I think not. No; I think not.

The Hon. Mr. ROLLESTON, M.H.R., examined.

49. *The Chairman.*] We will hear what you can state in narrative form, if you please, and any questions that suggest themselves can be put after.—Subsequently to the practical breaking down of the negotiations which were initiated by Mr. Bryce, and in which I was concerned, a proposal was made that another piece of land should be given by the Natives in return for being allowed to remain upon the Ngatahira Block. I had not personally anything to do with that negotiation in respect to Wharerangi; but I am aware, from papers in the office, that those negotiations also came to an end, because there was a difficulty as to the title to Wharerangi. So far as I know, that is the present position of the whole case—that further negotiations have failed, and the Natives have petitioned Parliament, as the Committee are aware, to obtain what they consider to be their rights in the matter. One point I should like to add, that I have omitted, that is, that during these negotiations the Natives increased their offer from 1,000 to 2,000 acres, which they were prepared to give up in order to carry out the arrangement suggested by Mr. Bryce and myself for the settlement of the matter.

50. *Mr. Bowen.*] What about the concession on the other side—by Mr. Sutton?—Shortly after that Mr. Sutton took possession of the land.

51. *The Chairman.*] Is that all you can say?—That is all that occurs to me at the present moment. I shall be glad to answer any questions. As I have said, these matters are known to me from reading the papers, not from personal acquaintance with the subject.

52. *Mr. Tomoana.*] Was Wharerangi the first piece of land that was given by the Natives to you and Mr. Bryce?—No.

53. Then, according to your statement, Wharerangi was a subsequent piece?—Yes, subsequently; that is what I stated, when negotiations as to the first block had apparently fallen through, negotiations appear to have arisen with regard to another block of land quite distinct.

54. What was the first piece of land offered by the Natives?—I do not know the name, but it is that alluded to and spoken of in the statement read yesterday. It is Te Kohurau.

55. Are you aware the Maoris gave up that 1,000 acres?—I am aware they offered to do so, and they were prepared to do so, as far as I know

56. And what you heard subsequently of the block, Wharerangi, do you consider it was the Maoris who were willing or who had offered that land?—I understood that one section of them certainly were; but one of the difficulties that arose in respect to the negotiations was that all the Natives were not willing, and that the land was incumbered with liabilities, which made the thing difficult to carry out.

57. Did you hear that the negotiations—the talk about Wharerangi—came from the Maoris, or did it emanate from Mr. Sutton?—I cannot say positively. My impression is it emanated from Mr. Sutton.

58. You could not state clearly whether Mr. Sutton told you that the land he wished for was Wharerangi?—No. I never had any communications personally about the matter, and I could not therefore state that positively. I wish to withdraw part of the answer. [Question repeated.] I had personal communication with Mr. Sutton, with Mr. Bryce, on one occasion with regard to that question. I could not say that Mr. Sutton definitely asked for Wharerangi.

59. Do you know, or did you hear, of Paora Kaiwhata and Paora Torotoro being requested to come here to speak about this block?—The papers say they did.

60. Do you know whether it was through Mr. Sutton these persons were asked to come here to settle that question, on account of Mr. Sutton wanting the block Wharerangi?—I could not say, for I have no personal knowledge with reference to that.