

Dr. Featherston would pay interest on the impounded rents, there was a pretty general feeling of satisfaction amongst the tribes.

28. Then, had these rents been regularly paid the Maoris previous to Dr. Featherston's warning?—I cannot say. I had nothing to do with it. I had no personal knowledge of the matter. It would have been part of my duty to have reported the matter had it come before me.

29. Were they regularly paid after the warning had been given?—Certainly not.

30. Were they ever completely paid?—As I stated in my statutory declaration, certain of the runholders had gone into the Bankruptcy Court, and could not pay. The facts were made known to Dr. Featherston, who told the Provincial Government that they would have to make up the loss.

31. Were they ever completely paid off by the runholders?—I believe not.

32. You have stated that some part of the Native land was good: what part of it?—The land seaward of Himatangi is very poor. This block, which is good, contains 11,700 acres, including the land we are now speaking of.

33. Have there not been additions made of two twenty-sevenths?—Yes.

34. The amount would be represented by five thousand acres?—The award of the block was one-half less two twenty-sevenths.

35. The Maori owners of this land, feeling dissatisfied, then applied to the Government?—I left the colony about that time, having first of all entered my protest against the Government confiscating the land of the Natives simply because they had not surveyed it; and when I returned from England in 1874 I found the Maoris had obtained no redress. At my first interview with them, on the West Coast, I was retained by them to try and get redress. In 1877, three years after I had been retained, an Act was passed declaring that the three hapus were entitled to the whole of the Himatangi Block. The Act gave back the whole of the block described in the schedule to these three hapus, with certain restrictions on the alienability.

36. The preamble of the Act provides that the whole of the block belongs to the three hapus?—Yes.

37. I should like to ask you upon what evidence that assertion was founded, inasmuch as the other tribunal decided that only a half of it belonged to them?—I presume that Parliament constituted itself a Court of Appeal. Evidence was taken before the Native Affairs Committee, and the evidence is on record.

38. I suppose you are able to explain the character of the evidence?—No; I reply that I cannot.

39. Sir Donald McLean's evidence would have been favourable?—I do not know whether he gave any formal evidence. He led me to believe that if these three hapus were entitled he would assist me in getting the land back.

40. Then the Parliament awarded to these Natives the whole of the Himatangi Block except this 700 acres, which have been described?—Yes. Mr. A. McDonald, in his evidence, says that this 700 acres should be given back also, or compensation for its sale by the Government.

41. Who had the lease of the block?—Captain Robinson.

42. What kind of stock was on it?—Sheep and cattle.

43. Had he any other leases?—He had land adjoining.

44. Different from the Himatangi Block?—Yes.

45. What was the rent he had to pay for the Himatangi Block?—I think it was £100. At any rate, the amount to be collected when Dr. Featherston took it in hand was £500. My recollection of the affair is that Captain Robinson complained of others being let off in whole or in part, and, because he was a man of substance, he had to pay in full. Ultimately Dr. Featherston agreed to take £400 for the Himatangi back rents in full.

46. Did not the run for which this rental was paid include more than that run? Did it not run right to the sea?—A large portion of it had been purchased by the Government, but I am not prepared to say how much. This Himatangi part bordered on the Manawatu River, and extended outwards.

47. I want to know if the rent paid by Robinson for the Himatangi Block did not include a much larger tract of country?—I think not.

48. Would the Committee be safe in accepting Captain Robinson's statement upon it?—I should say so, by all means.

49. Did Captain Robinson pay the Himatangi people regularly?—So far as I am aware, the money was paid to Parakaia and other Natives claiming with him. It was not until this dispute with Ngatiapa, when they came down and claimed everything, that the payment to Parakaia was stopped.

50. Can you speak positively as to the money being paid regularly up to that time?—I cannot speak positively after a lapse of fifteen years, but such is my conviction.

51. Have you any personal knowledge?—No personal knowledge. Previous to that time I was Resident Magistrate of the district, and I was not supposed to have any knowledge of these illegal leases.

52. But your knowledge became very clear after you were employed in that particular duty?—Yes. I reported what rents were due. The fact was, we were winking at illegalities for the purpose of making a peaceful settlement.

53. From your knowledge of these disputes, do you think the Himatangi people would be likely to demand their rents after the warning?—Yes, I think so. After the warning Parakaia came to me and said it was hard he should be stopped from receiving his rent, as there was no question as to his right to it. He said there was no trouble about his lease, but that Ngatiapa were claiming the whole, and threatening to fight for it.

54. You said there was a general acquiescence amongst the Natives as to what Dr. Featherston had done?—Yes; to a certain extent.