

291. Take the 21,000 acres of Tamaki?—What do you mean, with totara on or off? I certainly knew what was totara or not in Umutaoroa when I valued it. I should say I put 300 to 500 acres of totara; the rest ordinary bush-land. The totara is mostly gone. It would cost from £2 to £2 10s. to bring it into grass.

292. Would it bring £6 10s. an acre?—

293. What is its value as agricultural land?—In grass, fenced, it is worth £5 to £6, and £7. I know there have been sales on the Umutaoroa at that price.

294. What would you value special settlement at, if bush cleared?—£5. The special-settlement land, uncleared, worth £2 to £3 an acre; in grass, £5.

295. When did you cease to be Land Commissioner?—Five or six years ago. I had nothing to do with the revaluations of the block; I had ceased to be Commissioner. The making the roads would increase the value of the special-settlement land.

296. I refer to the village settlements?—I put them at £1 to £2 an acre, without roads. The Umutaoroa had about the best totara on it. If no totara on it, I should not put it much higher than the village settlement. I cannot tell you what I valued the totara at. I put the totara at £10,000; it would come out that way. I have valued for companies. I have valued some of the settlement block. That would include improvements. I think it was on Piripiri Block. A good man. I do not think there was any totara in the village settlements. [Rees says he has to put in some papers by Kelly, Clerk of Native Land Court.]

Rees closes his case.

297. WILLIAM FREDERICK KNIGHT examined by Sainsbury.] Sheepfarmer at Danevirke. One of the lessees of Tahoraiti Nos. 1 and 2 Blocks. I took possession in 1881. When I became lessee I found grantees in No. 1 were put into No. 2, and *vice versa*. It was an error of the Court. Our leases were wrong. Signed by the wrong owners.

298. What did you do?—Nothing till 1886; then I endeavoured to get the titles put right. From then I made continual applications to Mr. Lewis, the Chief Judge, and Mr. Mitchelson. In 1891 I went to Wellington. I interviewed the Chief Judge and Mr. Lewis and Mr. Cadman, and asked could they not take some steps to have it validated—put right. Chief Judge thought, under a section of the Act, he had power to do it. I got forms of application. I interviewed the Natives, and in October, with the assistance of Mr. Fraser, I got the applications sent to the department—I believe, to the Native Minister. I sent first application in July, 1891. [Letter 2nd July, 1891, to Mr. Cadman.] Eventually a Court sat at end of year. Chief Judge came up himself and took evidence at Danevirke. [Sainsbury says that report from Chief Judge to Native Minister, if it be found, no powers. Memorandum of Cadman to Solicitor-General. Solicitor-General's opinion: Recommends legislation to deal with all existing interests.] After this I saw the Chief Judge, and heard his decision; and he told me a Bill ought to be brought in. I got a letter from the Native Minister informing me. [1st February, 1892.] I then saw Mr. W. C. Smith, and asked him to assist me in bringing in a Bill. I went to him because he was member for the district. He said he would. The next I heard was a copy of the Bill being sent to me by Mr. Smith during the session of 1892, and I was asked if it would meet the case. The Act was passed, and a sitting of the Court held, and the whole matter disposed of. The Natives live within a mile of my house.

299. When did you see the first memorandum of Mr. Rees?—About the following, day in the newspaper.

300. Up to that time had you ever heard that the completion of the Umutaoroa Block purchase was to be dependant on the passing of the Tahoraiti Bill?—No. I never heard that Cadman and Smith had any pecuniary interest in getting that Bill passed. I know the Natives in the Umutaoroa Block. One of them offered to sell me her share in the block. That was some time in 1891. It was Akuera Paewai, a successor. I did not entertain it. I would not interfere with another person's property. It was under lease to Cadman and Smith. It was well known in the district that they held a lease of it. I am lessee of Kaitoke Block, and part owner: we have acquired some interests. It lies on the other side of Umutaoroa—to the south-west, on the other side of Manawatu. Part of it is similar to Umutaoroa—some clay, some loose stone. I should say the Kaitoke is superior to the Umutaoroa. I am buying shares in the Kaitoke. We are paying now £1 an acre. We have paid less than 10s. I have had experience in buying Native land. We look upon it purely as a speculation. We do not know what will be awarded to us. I know the Umutaoroa Block. I was a member of the Danevirke Road Board; now Chairman. I remember the last valuation being dealt with by the Board. I saw Rose's valuation: 4,973 acres, at £6,000.

301. Did you consider that fair valuation?—As the block was we did, and do.

302. *Cross-examined by Mr. Rees.*] I consider £1 5s. a fair value. I would not give more than £1 5s. an acre for it—the whole block. I would not entertain the offer of a share to me because land was under lease to Cadman and Smith and my brother. I had heard Cadman and Smith had bought shares. It depends upon circumstances whether I would buy a share in any block.

303. What is the minimum size cut for milling?—Nothing under 2ft. diameter generally. Totara and matai under 2ft. is useful for posts, &c. I do not know that they would take smaller for sleepers. I think it was end of 1891. Chief Judge said he had not the power.

304. Were you present when any petition or assent given by them for Bill to pass?—No, I think not.

305. Are you aware about the prices of land that is being sold on the Umutaoroa Block?—I was consulted by an intending purchaser.

306. ALFRED L. D. FRASER, examined by Sainsbury.] I live at Hastings. Am Native Agent. Have been since 1888. Was licensed in 1890. As to Tahoraiti, in 1891 the matter was referred to me by the last witness, Mr. Knight. He asked me to look into the matter and give my opinion upon it. He said it had been suggested to him that an application under section 13 of the Act of 1889 would meet the case. I looked into the matter. I found there had been some conveyance, and,