

106. The purchases have been proceeding up to within the last three years?—That is so, and are proceeding now—on the opposite side of the road.

107. All at the same price?—I do not know that the Government are buying land now.

108. But the Government purchases that you know of in that locality have been at the rate of 3s. an acre?—So the Natives have informed me.

109. Can you tell me the names of the blocks adjoining yours that you have been told the Government paid 3s. for?—Mamaku is one.

110. And you say that the timber is as good as, or possibly better than, that of the land you have?—Yes.

111. The Government have sold some of that land to the Europeans right out?—Yes.

112. What price have the Government charged for that land plus the timber?—12s. 6d. an acre.

113. The receipts you estimate the Native owners will receive from you for the timber—disabuse your mind from the royalty—is £2 10s. per acre?—That is so.

114. Have the Natives the use of the land while you are cutting the timber?—Yes, they are occupying it now.

115. In what way?—Houses are built there, and they are going on to cultivate it as soon as the bush is felled.

116. So they will have cultivating rights, plus £2 10s. per acre?—That is so.

117. You say you are three miles from a railway-station?—Yes.

118. And you are 160 miles from a market?—Very near. Rotorua is 172 miles from Auckland, and I think we are fourteen miles from Rotorua.

119. And the freight by train is 3s.?—3s.

120. *Mr. Mander.*] It will cost you about 9s. to put this timber on the railway-trucks?—Yes.

121. *Mr. Fraser.*] And you estimate the revenue to the Government for freight will be about £10 per acre?—Yes. I take the average railage at 2s. It will probably be more than that.

122. Do you know a property that has been leased by a company known as the Taupo Syndicate?—I have heard of the company very often.

123. Do you know the property?—I know some of it.

124. What class of timber is it on that property?—Totara, matai, and rimu.

125. Is it a rich totara block?—Yes, very rich—the part that I know is.

126. You are not bound to answer this question unless you like, so I leave it to your discretion: as an expert, what would you say is the value of the totara country they have?—I could not give you an estimate.

127. Have all your negotiations with the Natives been of an amicable description?—Quite.

128. And you say they prefer to manage their own affairs, and are not at all anxious to hand over their administration to the Maori Council?—That was their answer to me when I tried to put the matter under the Maori Council.

129. *Mr. Herries.*] This land has been through the Land Court—the blocks you are dealing with?—Yes; all of it, and divided into shares.

130. I suppose you had legal advice before the deed was drawn up by your lawyer?—Yes.

131. He was satisfied that it was a perfectly legal and valid agreement?—Yes.

132. And the Maoris are satisfied that it is legal too?—Yes.

133. It does not deal with the land?—No.

134. Has the land any restriction on it beyond clause 117?—That I am not aware of. That has a wide scope.

135. Is the land in the thermal district?—I am not quite certain; it is somewhat near the boundary.

136. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] It is in the thermal district?—I was not certain about it.

137. *Mr. Herries.*] If the Maoris are dissatisfied they have their remedy?—Yes, and will quickly exercise it.

138. In the Supreme Court?—Yes.

139. Have you any remedy against them?—We have a right, according to our power of attorney, to enter and cut the timber ourselves, and pay them the royalty.

140. Suppose they refuse to allow you to enter?—Then we should be blocked. I do not know what would happen.

141. You are in this position: that they can enforce their agreement with you, and you cannot enforce your agreement with them?—Yes. Of course, if they had a disagreement with us they might force us out of the bush by mere force of strength.

142. Then, in the agreements they practically have the best of it?—Yes, as Maoris usually do in my experience.

143. They do not wish to come under the Maori Council at present?—No.

144. And this clause will compel them to put their land under the Maori Council?—I presume it would, from my reading of it. I have not seen the later clause, but it compels some one, I understand, to get a title.

145. So far as you are concerned you would not object to go before the Maori Council?—Not if the Natives would agree.

146. The clause says the Council can modify or ratify?—I do not want my agreements modified; I want them ratified.

147. But, so far as the Maoris are concerned, they want to deal direct with you without going to the Maori Council at all?—Yes. I got them together and asked them, and they said they would not do it.

148. Did you ever apply for an Order in Council to get the restriction taken off the block?—No.

149. You were not advised that it was necessary?—No.