

217. There had been no talk about it?—No; no one wanted it.

218. *Mr. Remington.*] How long have you known that district?—For the last thirty-five years. I have only been living in the district for two and a half or three years, but I have been living within a few miles of it and have been continually up and down the places.

219. *The Chairman.*] You said that you had bought timber at 4d. per 100 ft. from the Europeans?—That is so.

220. From Crown tenants?—I think so. I know the one offering now is a Crown tenant, and I think the one I bought from is a Crown tenant.

221. If these Europeans had got this land from the Crown, and paid 6d. a hundred, how was it possible that they could sell it to you at 4d.?—They had not paid 6d. for it. They bought the land and the timber at 12s. 6d. an acre. It was opened under the three tenures of the Act.

222. Did you buy from Europeans who had taken up the land under the right of purchase?—I do not know what his tenure is. The other man I referred to has the right of purchase, and he offers it to me at 4d.

223. Can you do that without the permission of the Commissioner?—Yes; and the Crown collected the royalty as rent. Thousands of acres have been sold for 4d.

224. Then, they are not acting according to the *Gazette* notice?—The public outside the Government are not. The Government have been selling land regardless of the timber. Any person could take up land under the three tenures of the Act, and could do what they like with it, but now the timber has to be considered.

225. Has any alteration been made in the Act?—No; but regulations have been issued.

226. Do you think the regulations can supersede the Act?—Well, they are acting on the regulations.

227. In this case, where you bought it from the European, you did not engage the European to do the work for you as you did the Natives?—No.

228. Then, he does not receive the benefit of the 2d. in the one case and the 1s. in the other?—That is so.

229. So that the Native really gets 1s. 2d. more for his timber than the European?—Yes; but the Natives provide the labour.

230. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] With regard to the consumption of timber at Rotorua, Rotorua has been developed very much lately?—Yes.

231. And the necessity for timber is also growing with it?—Yes.

232. And your sawmill is within how many miles?—Fifteen miles; we are three miles back from the line, but we have a tram-line right along the road.

233. *Mr. Fraser.*] About what percentage do you send to Rotorua as compared with Auckland?—Very little.

234. *Mr. Herries.*] Mr. Carroll asked you whether there was not some new activity in the sawmilling line at Rotorua?—There has been nothing new.

235. There have been three mills at work there for the last ten years?—Yes, and the only additional one is our own.

236. The other mills are buying timber from the Crown tenants?—I believe the Natiri Mill is on Native land.

237. *Mr. Harding.*] What are you paying for the railway rate? How do you obtain the concession down to 3s. to Auckland?—That is the recognised price.

238. Did you deputationise the Railway Department?—I did not.

239. *Hon. Mr. Carroll.*] You do not know the terms of the earlier milling contracts?—No.

240. *Mr. Hone Heke.*] What is the freight from your bush to Rotorua?—One shilling. We are in the bush three miles before we reach the railway-line.

241. Have you heard any instance where the Government have purchased land at 3s., and afterwards found out it was very valuable and handed the land back to the Natives?—No, I have never heard of such a case.

242. They have retained that benefit for themselves?—Yes.

243. Do you know that the rule is now, according to the Crown Lands Board, in the disposal of timber on Crown lands, that the conditions are very stringent in regard to the quantity to be cut and the payments to be made; that if you negotiate with the Crown for a timber-area on their own lands that their conditions are very stringent, and that they made it conditional that you must cut a certain number of feet every year?—They are restrictions that refer to kauri timber.

244. In regard to ordinary timber—such as rimu, matai, and totara—the Crown Lands Board cannot sell any of their timber below the rates that are set out in the regulations issued by the Minister?—That is so. I am dealing with rimu, and 6d. is the price that the Government sells at everywhere. There is no restriction with regard to rimu. In the part of the North Island referred to rimu has had a very great struggle to come in at all as against kauri. It is different in the South Island.

245. In regard to the 1s. you allow the Natives for felling and cutting the timber, in the event of the Natives failing to satisfy you you can enter and cut it yourself?—Yes; in that event the 1s. would cease to be paid. That 1s. is paid for labour, practically.