

69. And the President?—I do not think the accessor was there.

70. Then it was not the Board?—No.

71. *Mr. Massey.*] Still, the President was there in his official capacity?—Yes.

72. Did he take any part in the meeting?—No, no part whatever. It was at this meeting that I asked for an adjournment for the purpose of looking into my position in opposing the resolution. I found that my side was on the wane, and I asked the Chairman of the Board to adjourn for a fortnight to give me time to decide finally what stand we should take. After the adjournment another meeting was convened by me, and Mr. Hardy and all those who were favourable to our cause and stood by us assembled at Te Kuiti.

73. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] For how long did the meeting of assembled owners adjourn?—About a fortnight. It was unanimously decided by our committee, seeing that our numbers were waning, that there was no course open to us but to accept what we thought would be fair and just to both parties—to the sellers and non-sellers. Mr. Hardy was then deputed by our committee to approach the company.

74. *Hon. Sir J. Carroll.*] When you say “the company” you mean Mr. Herrman Lewis?—Mr. Herrman Lewis.

75. *Mr. Massey.*] Was Mr. Lewis present at these meetings?—No.

76. Who was his representative?—Mr. Dalziell, I take it.

77. Did Mr. Dalziell act for him at all the meetings?—Yes. Mr. Hardy had to give his reply during the interval of two weeks. Then we should know whether we were to go on further with the matter or accept what we thought fair and just for the Natives. Mr. Hardy went to Palmerston North, and met there members of the company.

78. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] I suppose we can get this from Mr. Hardy at first hand. Give us facts that you know yourself. When did Mr. Hardy report back to you?—Before the next meeting.

79. What did he report?—That the company was agreeable to give us £2,500 worth of shares in addition to the £25,000 that the company had already agreed to pay the Native owners. After hearing Mr. Hardy the Natives were quite pleased, because, although they were selling their birth-right, as it were, in the block, by means of the shares they still retained an interest. It was only on that condition that they gave way.

80. *Mr. Massey.*] What is the capital of the company?—I am not prepared to say.

81. Was that point explained to the Native owners—the proportion represented by £2,500 worth of shares?—No; but the resolution before the Board covered that.

*The Chairman.* We will get that from Mr. Lewis.

*Mr. Massey.* My point is this: that if the witness, who was there representing the Native owners, does not know the proportion of the capital represented by the £2,500 worth of shares, it was impossible for the vendors to know.

82. *The Chairman.*] What is your answer to that, Mr. Macdonald?—I could not say as to that.

83. *Mr. Massey.*] Do you know the value at which the block was supposed to be taken over by the company?—No.

84. *Hon. Sir J. Carroll.*] Will you go on now to the third meeting?—At the third meeting Judge Holland presided as President of the Board. Am I correct, Mr. Dalziell?

*Mr. Dalziell.* Yes.

85. *Mr. Massey.*] That was the adjourned meeting—the final meeting, Mr. Macdonald?—Yes.

86. According to the Chairman of the Board, it was held on the 22nd March?—Yes. This was the meeting regarding which Mr. Bell remarked the other day in his evidence that I was either sold or that the Natives were a lot of knaves or fools. Before we finally agreed, and before consent was given by me, we had a meeting of all parties—sellers and non-sellers—for our last stand, as it were, in connection with Mokau matters, and it was decided unanimously, in view of the fact that they were getting a further consideration of £2,500 in shares and were still retaining an interest in the block, and seeing that if they did not sell they would have to enter into litigation of which they did not know the end, and which might result in their losing the land they had left—rather than encounter all these obstacles and intricacies of law they asked me to give my consent before the Board, which was done.

87. *The Chairman.*] You gave your consent on behalf of your clients?—Yes. There was no other course for us to take than that. My people were getting away. This £800 and all the other troubles were working on them and they were departing from us gradually, and I knew that at the next meeting I would stand alone.

88. Did your connection with your clients end with that meeting?—Yes.

89. Have you anything further to add?—Only in connection with the £2,500 that has been mentioned for costs. After the resolution was passed it was decided that we should convene another meeting.

90. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] Not a meeting of assembled owners, convened by the Board?—No, a meeting of the parties who had agreed to the sale. The Board had nothing to do with it whatever. This was a private meeting of owners, held to ascertain what would be the quickest and cheapest way of paying costs. There were not only the costs of the present matter, but it appears, from statements made by several persons before that committee, that this matter had been going on for years, and certain costs were incurred prior to this which had to be paid by the owners. So it was proposed that the sum of 10 per cent. should be deducted from all those who were willing to pay.

91. *Mr. Massey.*] What costs were incurred?—Legal costs.

92. To whom was the money to be paid? You say that Mr. Bell was out of it. Who was entitled to receive the money?—The money had to be paid over to myself as representing one party, and Pepene Eketone as representing another party.