

196. Then I ask you, does it coincide with your own opinion?—No.
197. *Mr. Herries.*] What was the reason why your clients opposed the sale of the land?—In the first place, they did not want to sell, being Te Whiti-ites and Tohu-ites; and, secondly, they had an idea that it was worth more.
198. Was any further price suggested?—No.
199. Did they consider the land worth £2 an acre?—That was what they considered it worth.
200. Do your clients still think it is worth more than they got?—Yes.
201. They still think they got less than the real value of the land?—That is what they think.
202. You said they considered they had only two alternatives—either to find £800 or to part with their land at a less value than they thought it was worth?—And make the best of a bad bargain.
203. As a matter of fact, they have really taken less than they think the land is worth, in order to make the best of a bad job?—Yes.
204. What is your opinion about the value of the land?—Block 1F is very broken country, and there is a lot of sandstone. All the hills there are razorbacks. A good portion of 1F I would not value at more than 5s. or 6s. an acre: there is no milling-timber on it.
205. What about the minerals?—There is coal. I was told that the moment you expose the coal it all goes to pieces.
206. *Mr. Massey.*] Did you see the coal?—Yes, I went right through the mine.
207. *Mr. Herries.*] Is that on 1F?—No, it is on the other side of the stream.
208. It is not on the same block?—No; but the very same seam crops out from the mouth of the pit on the opposite side of the stream.
209. *Mr. Dive.*] Is that Stubb's coal-mine?—No.
210. *The Chairman.*] Did you say the crossing from Stubbs's mine to the other side was only about 20 yards?—Just the width of the stream.
211. *Mr. Herries.*] Taking all the blocks together, did you represent a majority of the owners?—I should say so, in shares.
212. *The Chairman.*] You say you have been on the property: were you up above the coal-mine, as far as the Panirau?—Yes, I went as far as the coal-mine and about two or three miles above it.
213. You know the quality of the land above there?—It is very poor.
214. You are aware that a lot of the land was subleased by Flower's people? Do you know where Mr. Joshua Jones himself lives—at the signal-station?—Yes.
215. You know that that is a portion of the Mokau Block?—Yes.
216. Do you know that the company had no right whatever over that?—Yes.
217. That was subleased?—Yes, that was a reserve.
218. It was a portion of the Mokau-Mohakatino Block?—Yes.
219. Did you go into the Mohakatino Block at all?—Yes.
220. How far?—About two miles and a half up the stream.
221. What was the quality of the land there?—It is a little better than that towards the coal-mines, but it is very broken country.
222. Are you aware that all that land is subleased—that all that land up the Mohakatino was subleased for the full term by Flower's people?—Yes.
223. Do you think some confusion arises over the Munga-awakino and Mokau-Mohakatino blocks in the minds of some of the witnesses? The Munga-awakino Block is the block of Mr. Stubbs—where the coal-mine is?—Yes.
224. You are aware that the company also purchased that?—Yes.
225. In connection with these blocks that have been mentioned to-day, is there any confusion? Have the Mokau-Mohakatino and the Munga-awakino blocks been mixed up?—No.
226. How many Te Whiti and Tohu-ites were amongst your people?—I should say about five—four or five very old people.
227. Your value of the land in the upper reaches, you said—and you are a farmer of that land—was about 5s. an acre?—Yes.
228. Why do you place it at that figure?—I am judging it from land down the sounds that we have—about 3,000 or 4,000 acres. I take it that our land there is much better than the land here, because there is more sandstone. It is patchy, as far as limestone is concerned. This block that the company took up adjoining the Mokau, part of it is bush and part fern, and I say that that portion of the country is valueless, to my mind, because it is all pumice.
229. Did those clients of yours invite you to act as their agent, or did you ask to be allowed to do it for them?—They invited me.
230. *Mr. Massey.*] With regard to the quality of the soil, do you know that the company who are now the owners of the land describe this block as “heavy bush and limestone country, of first-class quality,” and go on to say that there are good roads from New Plymouth and Te Kuiti, and that the Mokau River is navigable on the entire frontage of the block. Do you know that to be a fact?—If that is stated in the report I say it is wrong, because the road from Te Kuiti to Mokau is awful in winter. It is very broken.
231. It is a good road in summer, is it not?—Yes.
232. Fit for a bicycle or a motor?—Yes. We hired a motor-car from New Plymouth to Te Kuiti to attend the meeting of the Board there, and the chauffeur said he would not drive there again for a thousand pounds.
233. *Hon. Sir J. Carroll.*] That road does not go over the block?—Yes.
234. *Mr. Massey.*] What time of the year was that—in winter?—Yes.
235. Do you know that the coal from the pit to which you refer is being sold at New Plymouth for £1 10s. a ton?—I am not aware of it.