

at whereby each Native was to pay 10 per cent. of his proportion of the purchase-money in to the Board—the Natives had carried a resolution to that effect. They were unanimous in wishing to do so. I raised some objection—I pointed out that I was not a debt-collecting agency; but finally I decided, as they all wished it, to hand them two cheques. I handed each Native two cheques, taking his receipt in full. Without exception they handed the smaller cheque back to me.

137. You collected the 10 per cent.?—I did not collect the 10 per cent.: they handed it back to me. I got them to sign an agreement—which I can put in—stating that that was the arrangement they had arrived at. It has been said the Board collected the 10 per cent., and actually made the deduction. That is quite incorrect. The 10 per cent. was paid to me at the wish of the owners, and I merely acted as banker. I gave them the Board's own receipt, and opened a separate ledger account for the amount they handed back.

138. Have all the Natives been paid?—No, there are some still to pay.

139. Was the £25,000 paid by Mr. Lewis to you?—Yes.

140. *Mr. Herries.*] On what date?—Some time in May. I could not tell you exactly.

141. *Mr. Massey.*] For the purposes of the 10 per cent., did you take into your calculation the £2,500 worth of shares?—No—10 per cent. of the £25,000. That was the arrangement they intimated they had arrived at. It was not for me to say if the charge was excessive or otherwise.

142. How much did you collect in this way?—About £1,500.

143. That would represent £15,000?—Yes.

144. Do you still hold that money?—I hold all of it except some £276.

145. What is intended to be done with this money?—The intention was that it should be paid out as directed by a sub-committee consisting of Pepene Eketone and Tuiti Macdonald.

146. The latter was the gentleman we had here yesterday?—Yes.

147. You say you have paid away two or three hundred pounds?—£270-odd, I think.

148. To whom?—We paid Mr. Damon £100—he was the interpreter and one of the agents—and Tuiti Macdonald £170-odd. Those are the only payments I have made.

149. Have you been notified by this sub-committee as to what is intended to be done with the balance?—No.

150. You are simply holding it in trust in the meantime?—Yes.

151. Have any other claims been made?—One or two verbal applications have been made to me, but I have not entertained them.

152. By whom were they made?—By another of the agents interested.

153. I want his name?—Will this go into the Press?

154. I do not care whether it will or not. This is a public inquiry. I am asking for the names of the claimants on this fund?—I have been asked by Andrew Eketone to pay him something on account.

155. How much?—He just wanted some money.

156. Did he state the amount?—No, as far as I recollect.

157. Are you certain?—I would not be certain.

158. Did he tender you an account?—I do not think so. I have no recollection of ever having seen an account.

159. Was Andrew Eketone the only one?—I do not remember any other.

160. You are quite sure?—Yes.

161. What about Mr. Hardy?—Hardy never asked me for any money.

162. He has not made a claim?—No.

163. Is it intended by the Native owners to pay Mr. Hardy for his work in this connection?—I do not know what they are going to do.

164. Has his name been mentioned to you?—I know that Mr. Hardy has a claim against them.

165. For how much?—I do not know.

166. A claim on this fund?—Yes.

167. How do you know that he has a claim on this fund?—Because he told me.

168. And did he not mention the amount?—No; but I have a statement which I should be very pleased to put in—a statement of accounts, &c. It was handed to me, but I do not attach much weight to it. It is a rather interesting statement of account made by these agents. I do not know if it is up to date. [Produced.] I really know nothing about it.

169. It is very valuable evidence for the Committee. I see, according to it, that Mr. Hardy, up to the 11th April, had made a claim for £373. I will ask you to verify this?—He never made a claim to me. I simply say that Mr. Hardy gave me that statement.

170. Exactly. The claim is really upon this fund, of which you appear to be trustee. The account is headed "The Mokau Natives, in account with Edwin Henry Hardy, Te Kuiti," and the amount is set forth as £373 6s. 2d.?—That did not concern me at all.

171. There is a claim by Tuiti Macdonald, which you say has been paid, for £296?—I have not paid him that. I paid him £176.

172. The claim is for £296. I shall only refer to the first page here, which really explains the whole position. It is as follows: "Minutes of meeting held at Te Kuiti on 4th April, 1911, re Mokau-Mohakatino Blocks.—A meeting of those appointed by the Natives interested in the Mokau-Mahakatino blocks was held to-day, 4th April, 1911, to consider the question of costs in connection with (a) carrying on of the Mokau-Mohakatino case; (b) numerous meetings, at various places, affecting the said blocks; (c) consulting solicitors, attending Maori Land Board, Native Land Offices, and other matters contingent thereto. The representatives of the people who met were the following: (1) Tuiti Makitanara (Macdonald); (2) Ateara Ahiwaka; (3) Pae-