

314. Is it the usual thing, in connection with such transactions, to have interpreters and Native-land agents concerned in them?—Oh, yes.

315. And making claims for their costs?—I have no doubt they make claims.

316. You are aware that such claims are made from time to time?—I have no doubt they are.

317. Your Board is one of the most active in carrying out the provisions of the Act of 1909: your experience has been a considerable one?—Yes, I think I can say that.

318. Is it possible to avoid these expenses when transactions are directly between the Native owners and the European lessees or purchasers?—No, it is not possible. There must be somebody to act as intermediary between both parties.

319. In fact, they are incidental to private alienation of Native land?—Certainly. They are like lawyers.

320. When presiding at meetings of assembled owners, as the representative of the Board, what part do you take?—I simply explain the operation of the Act to the Natives, and call on them to elect a chairman, always explaining that they can elect anybody who is present. I always make it clear that it is not a meeting of the Board. If I am elected chairman I hear the owners on the matter, and put a resolution. It has to be proposed and seconded and carried in the usual way.

321. Do you take any part in advising as to a private transaction?—Certainly not.

322. As to the reasonableness of the consideration?—Certainly not.

323. As to whether it is to their benefit?—It is always explained to them that it is for them to say whether they will alienate the land or not. That was done in all these cases. It is done in every case. [Witness handed in several documents, &c., referred to in examination.]

FRIDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1911.

WALTER HARRY BOWLER further examined. (No. 7.)

1. *Mr. Dive.*] Will you kindly tell us how you came to convene the first meeting of your Board for the purpose of selling this land?—There was no meeting of the Board held for the purpose of selling the land.

2. I understood you to say yesterday that you were authorized by the Minister to call the meeting?—There seems to be some confusion between the Board's meetings and meetings of owners. I think you are referring to meetings of owners.

3. Did I understand rightly that you were instructed by the Native Minister to call the meeting of assembled owners?—Yes.

4. What is your duty, then, with regard to calling the owners together?—It is provided by regulation.

5. What is that?—We have to give fourteen days' notice in the *Kahiti*, and circularize the Natives.

6. Did you circularize the Natives?—Yes.

7. Did they complete the business that day?—No.

8. What did you do?—We adjourned the meeting—or, rather, the Natives adjourned the meeting.

9. To what date?—To a date to be fixed by me.

10. Did you circularize them again?—Yes.

11. All the Natives?—All the Natives, as far as I could.

12. I understand that you confirmed the sale of this land before you got the Order in Council: is that so?—We confirmed the sale, subject to verification of Mr. Dalziell's statement that the Order in Council had been signed.

13. Why did you take Mr. Dalziell's statement?—I think I have already explained that. The confirmation was subject to verification of that statement.

14. Do your minutes show that?—I think so. Yes, they do: "The Board decided to confirm the resolutions in each case, agreement not to be signed until a certified lease of other lands produced, and an Order in Council under section 203, 1909, gazetted."

15. Why did you take Mr. Dalziell's word for it?—Could we not take his word?

16. I am asking, Why did you? Would you have taken any other individual's word for it?—Not to the same extent as a solicitor's word.

17. Why should you take his word when he was an interested party?—When we took his word our decision was subject to verification of the statements made by him.

18. Why should you take an interested person's word that such would all be in order?—We only took his word to this extent, that if they were not in order our resolution would be of no effect.

19. Is not this the position: that you were prepared to accept any statement made by him to facilitate the sale?—Not at all.

20. What are the laws made for: are they not made for your guidance and direction?—Yes.

21. Why do you not conform to them? Why do you take outside statements?—Our proceedings are entirely in accordance with law. The resolution did not come into effect until the Order in Council was gazetted.

22. You got notice, I understand, that such would be gazetted on the 28th, and yet you confirmed the sale on—what date?—On the 23rd. You will notice that the Order in Council is dated the 14th.