

to execute the survey, being Returning Officer, and having to attend the Provincial elections. I agreed with Culliford to send up Mr. Sinclair, and after the election was over I would go up and verify it, and forward it to the Government. I gave no information to any one about the land at all. I did not describe land for Harley's purchase. I filled up the application for purchase in which my own name appeared. That information was given me by Culliford himself, at the time of my writing the application, which accounts for the gap, or space, between the application alluded to by the former witness.

Mr. *Shallcrass*: I am Inspector of Police. On the 13th I bought land from one of the purchasers, after the sale was closed. This was from George Harper. He thought so little of his bargain that he let me have it for £2 less than he paid for it himself. I knew nothing about the land till the sale was closed. I put in no application direct.

Mr. *Maclean*: I am Registrar of the Supreme Court. I bought land at Wangapeka on the 14th. On the morning of the sale I came down at 10 o'clock to my office, and heard from Constable Sherwood that a sale was going on. I went into the Land Office, and after finding some one to join me in a purchase, I made one. I don't remember whether Constable Sherwood told me any particulars about the transaction, but I very soon learned it from persons in the office. I do not mean the officials. I considered I had the same right to buy as any one of the public. I was not aware at the time I made the purchase that the Waste Lands Board anticipated withdrawing it from sale.

By Mr. *Kingdon*: I can't be certain whether Sherwood said it was auriferous land. I went in not being informed that auriferous land was being sold. I was aware of it before I purchased.

Mr. *Ernest Nehse*: The information I got about this gold reef I got from Mr. Culliford himself, on the 13th, I think, after he had been to the office, between 5 and 6 in the afternoon. I had some specimens of different gold fields, being Secretary to the Prospecting Committee—a voluntary society to encourage prospecting. Mr. Culliford came in company of Mr. Thomas and Mr. W. Harley to my shop. They wanted me to show Culliford my specimens. He then showed me some of his. I asked if it was a fair question to inquire where he got them. He answered, "I don't mind telling, since I am secure." He then told me they came from the Wangapeka, from a reef he had discovered. After asking him several questions with reference to the matter, I made up my mind to secure some land myself. In the evening I communicated my information to Mr. Joseph Harley, and asked him if he would join, with his two brothers, in taking up any land, if possible, on lease. I appointed him in the morning to act for me, placing any funds he might require for my share at his disposal. Mr. Culliford did not know I was communicating this to Mr. Harley; at least I never mentioned it to him. Culliford said in the presence of W. and Thomas Harley "I don't mind telling you, since I am secure myself." I was not aware of the exact locality of the land, but I knew it was to the west or north, or whatever it might be, of Mr. Culliford's application. I had no communication with any of the Government officers before I got the information from Culliford. It was after his communication to me in presence of W. and T. Harley that I had the conversation with Joseph Harley.

Mr. *John Sharp*: I am Resident Magistrate of Nelson. I believe I bought land on the 14th; I don't remember the date, and I knew nothing of the fact till some time after. I think I received my information from Mr. George Sinclair, who told me he and I were partners. I came down to the Land Office the same day of the sale, to ascertain the fact. I wished in the Land Office to have the application amended, and my name withdrawn. I was informed that no application could be touched. I don't remember by whom it was. I asked to look at the applications, and I then saw that one of the subsequent applications described the land in the application my name was concerned in as a boundary. I then saw it could not be altered. I wished my name to be withdrawn, because I did not wish to be mixed up in the transaction. I knew before 10 in the morning that persons I saw there were going to purchase—they told me so. Mr. Everett I think told me first. I had seen the specimens the night before in his place. It was because I was a Government officer that I did not wish to be mixed up in the transaction. I don't know why Government officers should not be so mixed up, but for reasons of my own I did not wish to be. I think Mr. Sinclair, when he told me of the transaction, told me that either Mr. Harley or Mr. Brunner had included me in the application; I am not sure which. I did not pay any money, nor have. I am not aware that Mr. Harley has given evidence this morning that he did this. I always thought Mr. Brunner did so. I daresay this was because I saw the application in his (Brunner's) handwriting; but afterwards, when I was told it was Harley's application, I accepted the information.

By Mr. *Moss*.—Do you generally permit your clerk to sign your name to papers involving payment of money? This was an unusual transaction.

Neither Mr. Harley, nor Mr. Brunner, nor any one else, had any authority from me to sign, or put in any application. When Harley told me about it I laughed, as I knew of the transaction before. I said, "Well, you have done wrong at any rate." When he told me, I had heard it from several people who had been bullying me about it; but I never said I was pleased: if he said so, he said what was not the fact. I consider a Government officer has as much right as any one else to purchase land. I do not consider any Government officer would make use of information obtained officially for his advantage. I knew of this land being open for sale, and had declined to make use of the information.

Mr. *H. D. Jackson*: I am Provincial Auditor. I bought land on the 14th. I heard at Everett's Hotel that Culliford had bought land, and saw the specimens at the same time Mr. Sharp saw them. I had no idea of buying land till I got into the Land Office. Next morning I saw the crowd around the table. I got no more information, but it was purely from seeing others buy. I have bought land before in the same office when I saw others buying it. As far as I can recollect, there was no attempt to keep the sale secret. Culliford was present when I saw the specimens. I can't say whether Culliford said where they came from. I learned at Everett's Hotel the day before the sale that the gold had been discovered. Culliford was present when the specimens were shown me. I am doubtful about it being said in his presence where the gold came from. The conversation was general. I met one or two people going to the Land Office, who asked me if I was going to buy land. I said, No. I think I said, "What is going on?" I think they said some reefs were being sold. I ascertained the