

97. Have you got the orders passing this land through the Court?—Yes; I have got copies of the orders. [Orders handed in.] After the arrangements for the purchase of these lands were made, Mr. Wilson made advances upon them to the Natives to the amount of £60, when the preliminary agreements were entered into. The Survey Department were moved to survey the land, and surveyed it at a cost to the Government of £97 17s. On the 18th November, 1876, the lands were notified as lands required for public purposes, under the Immigration and Public Works Act. In July, 1876, the cases came before the Court at Tologa Bay, Judge Rogan being the presiding Judge. Mr. Wilson was not present at the sitting of the Court. After the lands had been through the Court, the question arose as to the Government officer not being present to pay any money upon them, or to complete the purchase; and Cooper, who was present, arranged with the Natives to sell the lands to him. He had deeds prepared, and the signatures were witnessed by Mr. Campbell, Resident Magistrate, and Mr. Ferris, as interpreter. I may say that these three blocks of land were the subject of inquiry at the Commission that sat at Gisborne to investigate the charges which Mr. Wilson made. Judge Rogan, in his evidence (which was given on oath), refers specially to these three blocks of land. On the Native Office becoming aware of these orders being endorsed to Mr. Cooper, steps were ordered to lodge a caveat against further dealings with the land. It was done. The instructions were given by the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Donald Reid, and the lands have been locked up ever since. I would also point out to the Committee that there are several minors in the orders assigned to Mr. Cooper, and the Native Lands Act of 1873 is very particular in dealing with the property of minors.

98. *The Chairman.*] What is the total number of names, and the total number of minors?—In the Ngatawakawaka Block there are eleven grantees, six of whom are minors; in the Puremungaahua Block there are twelve grantees, two of whom are minors.

99. *Hon. Mr. Nahe.*] Have any trustees been appointed by the minors?—No.

100. Why have they not been appointed?—No applications for the appointment of trustees have been received.

101. Have any of these people died?—I cannot say.

102. Is not the law compulsory on the point of recommendation as to the appointment of trustees for minors?—The Committee have the Act before them. I would rather not give an opinion on that point. I would only further say upon this matter that the Government have paid £284 of public money for these three small blocks of land.

103. How is it that the Court has not made a recommendation to the Government for the appointment of trustees in these three cases?—I cannot say. It may be one reason why the Judge has not been moved to recommend trustees, that the Government have lodged a caveat against further dealing with the law.

104. How is it that these lands have been specially exempted from the operation of the law? In other cases, trustees have been appointed for minors. How is it that these three blocks are exempted?—I cannot say. It may be the reason: that the Government have directed that no further dealings with the lands shall take place.

105. Do you think that if a re-hearing between Cooper and the Government had been granted these difficulties would have continued or been wiped away?—I cannot say.

106. Do you think that if a re-hearing had been granted these troubles would have continued, or that matters would have been cleared up?—I cannot express an opinion in the matter. They might be.

107. You have already said that no memorial has issued for Waingaromia No. 2. How do the others stand?—The Government have stopped action in these three blocks. It was done under caveat.

108. *Mr. Tawhiti.*] Who are the Natives who sold to the Government in the first instance?—There was a lease in the first instance.

109. Who were the people who sold or leased to Cooper, whichever it was?—I only know they are named in the deed.

110. Henare Potai did not sell to Cooper?—Henare Potai is not a grantee for Waingaromia No. 2.

111. When the judgment was given, who got the land, Cooper's men or the Government men?—I have no knowledge of the men Cooper dealt with outside his deed of purchase, and his deed is signed by the grantees.

112. *The Chairman.*] You state that £200 odd were paid in respect of several blocks?—Yes.

113. Was that included in the larger sum of £4100?—No; there were certain preliminary deeds of purchase.

114. With respect to this £200 odd, was that paid to the rightful owners?—Yes.

115. Was that £4100 odd paid to the rightful owners?—That I am not prepared to say. I don't know how the money is divided. Here is £600 paid in one sum. No doubt that money would be distributed. Henare Potai signed the receipt for it.

116. And he was found not to be owner of No. 2?—Yes; the receipts are all here.

117. You stated that when the Court sat Mr. Wilson was not present to make payments on behalf of the Government, and the Maoris were disappointed?—It appears so.

118. Is there any special reason for his absence?—Yes; he assigned a reason, which will be found in the evidence, that he had to visit Wellington for the purpose of getting funds, and that the money he had tendered for the purchase of those blocks did not arrive at Gisborne until the day or the day after the lands had passed the Court. That is the reason he assigned himself.

119. And I understand you to say that Cooper told the Maoris that he would take the place of the Government, and make the purchase instead of them?—I was not present, but the evidence given by Judge Rogan himself would be conclusive, I think, on that matter.

120. How would this have come to the knowledge of Judge Rogan? Was it done in open Court, or how?—He states in his evidence that Cooper came to him, and asked him to endorse the deed or witness the signatures.

121. That would so far account for the deed having been made after the decision, but previous to the order of the Court?—It has been explained in this manner: that the Judge, in his minute book, entered it on the 20th, and afterwards a copy was made on the back of the order signed by the Judge. It may be that the Judge did not sign the memorial until the 21st.