

131. *Mr. Carroll.*] Full powers were given to the committees; he was a member of this particular committee he speaks of: do you remember the Maoris making any proposition to Mr. J. B. Whyte as to the way out of these proceedings?—

132. *Hon. Mr. Mitchelson.*] For the relief of the Natives?—

133. *Mr. Carroll.*] Apart from the suggestion that each block should bear its own cost?—I do not know; some of the Natives may have made offers.

134. Did not the Natives at that meeting say they were quite willing to make a sacrifice of land if the bank would make an equal sacrifice in money?—Yes.

135. What would you suggest now? Have you any suggestion to make? Have you any suggestion in your own mind as to what should now be done?—We think the Government should intervene if it is possible for them to do so. Then, if the Government think it is not possible, to give us a decided answer.

136. In what way do you think the Government should settle this matter? How should they act suppose they took this business over?—We think the Government might see its way to pay off the liability to the bank.

137. *Hon. Mr. Mitchelson.*] Do you know that it amounts to £140,000 or £150,000?—If it is so much, then the Government might see its way to resell a portion of the land.

138. *Mr. Carroll.*] Were not you and the other Natives willing, in 1888, in the presence of Mr. J. B. Whyte, to sacrifice half the land?—Yes; I have said so.

139. *Mr. Kapa.*] What amount of money was fixed as the liability of the Kaiparo Block?—I do not recollect the amount.

140. *Mr. Rees.*] In relation to the Kaiparo Block, there was a mortgage signed by the owners to Captain Reed?—Perhaps there was.

141. Had not the majority of the Native owners in that block sold also to Captain Reed?—The mortgage was a sale.

142. Besides the mortgage, were there not fresh deeds of sale to Captain Reed?—I do not know.

143. *The Chairman.*] You say they mortgaged to Captain Reed, and that Mr. Rees told them that Reed's mortgage was illegal: that is what you said?—Yes; I did say that.

144. *Mr. Rees.*] Did I not tell the Natives distinctly at their public meetings that the mortgages were illegal, where spirits, guns, ammunition, or things of that sort had been given as the consideration—they should dispute such transaction as illegal; but that where a proper consideration was given, such as food, I would not dispute such transaction, whether of mortgage or sale; but these things—spirits, guns, ammunition—were illegal?—Mr. Rees told us that in case of any mortgage where guns or spirits or goods had been supplied it was illegal.

145. Did I use the word “goods”? Was it not “where spirits, guns, and ammunition” were given?—Yes; you used the words “guns,” “ammunition,” and “spirits.”

146. Do you remember the large public meeting which Karaitiana, Wi Pere, and myself attended?—Yes.

147. Did not the Natives request me to come from Napier to Gisborne in order to take the management of their lands in the Poverty Bay district?—It was Wi Pere who invited you.

148. Did not the invitation proceed from those who spoke at those meetings, not only Wi Pere, but from the Native chiefs?—I do not know that all the Native chiefs asked you at this meeting to come from Napier and take the management of their lands. I know that when you did come to Gisborne Wi Pere held a meeting at Wairangahika, which I and others attended; it was a very big meeting.

149. Were there not other meetings held in different places—large meetings?—Yes, there were.

150. Did not the Natives agree among themselves to act unitedly about their lands—not each individual by himself, but altogether—both in regard to lawsuits and the management of their land where there were no lawsuits?—It was agreed.

151. Did not the Natives agree that the necessary moneys for legal expenses, for surveys, for the necessary roads and bridges, or anything of that sort, should be raised in the best way it could be done for these purposes?—Yes; the Maoris did agree. I have already stated that in our own committee they agreed that the money should be raised on the Kaiparo Block.

152. Is it not the desire of the Maoris that the Government should intervene?—The Natives wish to get out of their difficulty.

153. Is it not the fact that many hundreds of Maoris will be injuriously affected if their lands shall be sold and the Government does not step in to their relief?—Yes, a great number of Natives will be injured—very deeply injured—many hundreds of them—if the Government do nothing to save their lands.

154. Will it not be a loss to some of the Maoris to the extent of all the lands they have? Will not many of them be landless if they should be forced off the land which they now hold?—Yes. I will give you a case—the case of this block Kaiparo. If nothing is done the Native owners of Kaiparo will lose everything they have; they have not another piece of land in the Poverty Bay district. Some of the Natives have only a quarter of an acre, others half an acre, some none at all. Some tribes, if these lands were closed to them, have other lands; but some have no other lands at all. If the Government do nothing these people will lose everything.

155. Will it not amount to this: that if the land is sold in this way these Natives will have to be absolutely forced off the land?—Yes; they would have nowhere else to go to.

156. Are there not a good number of these blocks on which the Natives are living and cultivating portions of the lands mortgaged or sold at the present time?—Yes. In regard to this very block that we are in occupation of, living on it, and cultivating it, I know it was sold to the bank the other day.

157. You are the chairman of the district Native committee of the East Coast?—Yes.