

become bankrupt. I have already stated that I spent £2,000 of my own money in addition to what was spent of the Pakowhai money. Riparata contributed a good deal of her own money in aid of the Natives fighting for their land in addition to what was contributed by the Pakowhai and other blocks. The expense of preparing documents was also very heavy, in some cases costing £600 in getting a single document prepared. Over £30,000 was paid to the Government by way of stamp duty and fees. The legal expenses were very heavy at that time. Part of the cost was owing to the complicated state of the law.

263. Hemi Waaka stated that he never got a sixpence, or his people, out of that £10,000. Mr. Houston then asked what had become of it.

*Hon. Mr. Mitchelson*: That answer applied to the £3,000.

*Wi Pere*: Perhaps it was a mistake of Hemi's.

*The Chairman*: Then Hemi said he supposed that it was spent by Mr. Rees and Wi Pere in travelling to England.

*Wi Pere*: There was no portion of the £3,000 or the £10,000 used by us in our trip to England. Both of these sums had been spent long before we went to England.

*Hemi Waaka*: I meant my answer to apply to the £3,000. My evidence was quite clear on that point. With regard to the £10,000, I stated that it was to be expended on the other blocks.

*The Chairman*: He stated afterwards that the committee never received any part of the £3,000 paid by Johnson, nor of the £10,000 raised under the agreement. His evidence was as follows: "We never received any portion of the £3,000 or of the £10,000. I do not know what became of it."

*Hemi Waaka*: We have not the least idea how these moneys were expended, because we never saw the accounts.

*Wi Pere*: With regard to the £10,000, I was at Rotorua when that was arranged. I was away for four months. When I returned it had been arranged between Mr. Rees and the committee that the sum of £10,000 was to be raised to be expended on Kareti and other blocks, Pakowhai to be held as a security, on the understanding that the money should be recouped out of those other blocks. The company took over these lands on that understanding. But I do not think the real amount was so large as £10,000. Mr. Rees knows all about it; perhaps it was only £5,000. Mr. De Latour tried to unite the committee, and invited them to meet again, but Hamiora Mangakahia prevented them, and they did not meet again to settle the difference. Subsequently the committee separated or withdrew from the company. The company took over everything, on the understanding that these moneys were to be expended on the other blocks, which were to recoup it. Eventually, through want of energy on the part of the company, none of these arrangements were carried out, and the interest was amounting up to a large sum. Great wrong was done to the Natives through the company locking up their lands, preventing them making any use of them. The bank did not advance any considerable sum on account of our visit to England.

264. *Mr. Carroll*: Was there not £5,000 arranged to be advanced by the bank?—The £5,000 advanced by the bank was for the purpose of paying interest.

265. The bank paid themselves their interest—that is, the interest due to the bank, and the Natives were charged with it?—Our return tickets cost about £130. I had to use a considerable sum of my own money in going to England.

266. *The Chairman*.] Do you know if the Natives were told whether any part of that £3,000 was spent in building bridges or in other works?—I heard that a portion of it was spent in building a bridge, to which I myself contributed £400.

267. Do you know whether the Natives interested in that £3,000 were made aware of that?—I believe the Natives were informed of that, because I heard Mr. Rees always say that Whataupoko was to recoup that money when sold; but when that block was sold none of the money due to the Pakowhai Natives was refunded, neither was any of my own money refunded.

268. *Hon. Mr. Mitchelson*.] It was Raniera who stated in his evidence that a portion of the money raised on his block was to build a bridge?—Yes; a principal portion of the cost of that bridge was obtained from the Kaiparo Block. I think the Government ought to pay for that bridge because they are charging rates on the improved value of the land effected by that bridge.

269. *Mr. Taipua*.] What do you say in reference to the petitioners statement concerning the meeting at Murewai?—The agreement drawn up at that time provided that we were to arrange with the committee for everything that was to be done relating to these lands. We had full authority under it to make any disposition of the land as arranged between ourselves and the committee. But for this agreement individual owners would have gone on selling their shares until the whole of the land should have passed away. The land was held under a joint tenancy. Our idea was to form a corporation, so that selling could only be carried out by the committee. I wish, in conclusion, to make a statement. It is on account of the trouble with this land that I wish the Government to come forward and assist the Natives.

270. *The Chairman*.] That statement is in this and the other two petitions?—But I wish to impress it more strongly on this Committee, in the hope of getting them to take a favourable view of this matter. Seeing that these are all very rich lands, I am sure that taking them over would entail no loss on the colony.

THURSDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 1891.

S. PERCY SMITH, Surveyor-General, examined.

271. *Hon. E. Mitchelson*.] Mr. Rees, in his evidence, has stated that the Government of which I was a member had arranged to take the Paremata and Pakowai Blocks, including the sheep grazing upon them, for the sum of £42,000; have you any knowledge of that?—I am not aware that the Government made any such arrangement.