

73. Each of the Natives you have named gave up an acre and a quarter in order that that road should be made?—Yes; it was the only way we could get to our sections.

74. I understand, Mrs. Simeon, that you are not interested in the land purchased by the Government for a rifle-range?—I have no interest in the acreage that has already been sold.

75. Have you anything more to tell us, Mrs. Simeon, about it?—No.

76. *Mr. Baker.*] You say you have offered the land to the Government?—Yes.

77. At what price?—£2,000, but only by letter—to Mr. Seddon.

78. *Mr. Macdonald.* : You have given them the choice, either to give you £2,000 or there should not be any rifle-range.

79. *Mr. Baker.*] Have you ever offered it to anybody else?—Yes, some time ago, but it never came to anything. Five years ago I offered it for £1,400. I have never put it in the market since.

80. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Do you know anything about the original lease—how the Government came to get the original lease of the land?—I believe they got it from Dr. Johnston; I do not know anything about it.

81. *Mr. Kirk* (through the Chairman).] Have I ever asked you to sell your land, or ever made you an offer?—Yes.

82. That was about two years ago?—When I was living in Taranaki you made me an offer. The offer was made through a private person; not from the Government.

83. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Is that the offer of £1,400 to which you referred?—Yes.

84. *Mr. Baker.*] Have you ever made any agreement to sell the land to anybody else? Have you made an offer recently—within the last twelve months?—No. I would not sell at all if the shooting were stopped.

85. Has anybody else on your behalf, or have you authorised anybody to deal with it?—Not that I am aware of. Agents may have, but not me. Many agents asked me, but I declined.

86. You are quite clear you never sold, or authorised anybody to sell it on your behalf?—Yes.

87. Do you know whether Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson were aware of the offer you made to the Government?—No.

88. *The Chairman.*] Do you know, Mrs. Simeon, whether any Natives wish to tender any evidence in regard to their interests in this matter?—Yes. They wish to tender evidence now. They are here—Tamati Wiremu te Whero and Rapana te Ohiro.

TAMATI WIREMU TE WHERO examined, through Mr. Pou, Native Interpreter.

89. *The Chairman.*] You are the owner, or have been the owner, of land in the neighbourhood of Polhill Gully?—Yes.

90. In what capacity do you come here?—On account of a portion of land sold by me to Mr. Kirk.

91. Is that a plan of the land sold?—Yes.

92. This is what was sold by you to Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson, was it?—Yes.

93. When did you sell it?—I am not quite sure whether it was a year or two years ago—near that I should think.

94. What is the number of the section?—No. 6.

95. How much? What quantity?—8 acres 3 roods 29 perches.

96. What price was it sold for?—At the rate of £25 per acre.

97. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Have you any other papers there?—No.

98. *The Chairman.*] Had you offered this land to the Government at any time?—No. Up to that time the land was under lease to Dr. Johnston.

99. What rent did you receive for it from Dr. Johnston?—At the time when the land was leased we were receiving £50 per annum for the whole of the land—Native reserves.

100. *Mr. Baker.*] What did that include?—I do not quite understand. The number of acres was about 80.

101. That would include the whole piece known as the Native reserve?—It might—some 80 acres, more or less.

102. *The Chairman.*] Have you any other land in the neighbourhood?—I have a small portion.

103. *Mr. Baker.*] Do you complain of the price you sold it at?—In the first place, I complain that the price was not enough, seeing that the section is close to town.

104. *The Chairman.*] You did not know that it was purchased for the Government?—Yes I did; I quite understood that. Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Kirk informed me that the negotiations for the purchase of this block were not being conducted in the same manner as that adopted in other cases; they were conducted on the understanding that the purchase was being made on behalf of the Crown.

105. What do you mean by that?—We were told that, as the range was required by the Crown, if we did not come to terms the land would simply be taken away from us.

106. Who told you that?—Mr. Atkinson and his firm.

107. I suppose you have since ascertained the price?—We did not find that out until some time afterwards, and then we found that the price was £3,000.

108. Is that the reason it was transferred?—No. Because we had no idea when the negotiations were first started that there was another price for the land.

109. *Mr. Baker.*] Were you offered £200, or were you offered £25 an acre, or did you say you would take £25 an acre?—No; £25 was offered, and I took it.

110. Were you satisfied?—Yes, at the time; of course, I thought that was the proper price for it.

111. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Did you understand that you were selling to Mr. Atkinson and his firm personally?—Yes.