

440. Were you present when the Natives signed these conveyances?—Yes.

441. In all the four cases?—Yes.

442. And it was your conviction that everything had been fairly paid to them?—I have never known any transactions more rightly conducted in my life. Everything was fully explained to them before Mr. Atkinson and myself. Not only do I make it a rule that the translation shall be on the deed before the Native signs it, but I afterwards read over to him what I have myself written, &c., as the translation on the then deed. I make an extra interpretation verbally to him, and find out if he is fully aware of what he is doing. I then ask him if he is perfectly satisfied, or if he wants further information. I do that in every case, no matter whether it be a small or a large one.

443. Do you observe in some of these accounts that the Natives have handed in that certain charges appear to have been made for expenses, &c.?—There appear to be charges of expenses in connection with the conveyancing.

444. Is a vendor in such cases properly charged expenses?—I believe so, but I do not know what the legal charges are. I know that each charge was explained to them, and they raised no objection to them.

445. And they were satisfied?—As far as I know. I think the charges were all right.

446. We have before us a statement from one of the Natives that he was charged the expenses of a messenger who was sent after him to fetch him to Wellington to convey this land. Can you explain anything of that sort, or how the Natives came to be under that impression at all?—I do not know, except that my usual experience is that when a Native is at a loss for an excuse he will invent one. I have no knowledge of anything of that kind being done. It is the first I have heard of it.

447. *Mr. Baker.*] Were you fully satisfied that the Natives were getting all they were entitled to for the sale of the land? As to fairness?—Yes; as far as my knowledge and experience goes. In fact, I thought at one time they were being paid too highly.

448. You thought the price they were receiving too high?—I should have been very sorry to have given it myself.

449. Twenty-five pounds an acre?—Yes.

450. Had you been over the ground?—I know the ground generally. I was not aware at the time that they were purchasing it for a rifle-range, or anything else in particular.

451. You did not know it was a purchase in connection with a rifle-range?—I did not know anything about it until I saw it some time after. I thought they might be purchasing it for building purposes, and I wondered how they were going to do it.

452. Do you know the ground now?—It is a long time now since I was up there—two years or more. I simply had my impression of Polhill Gully, and I thought it a very rough place. I thought the price they were giving was more than I should like to give.

453. *Mr. Macdonald.*] What is your estimate of the value of the land up there?—I am not able to give an estimate. I was merely speaking of the impression on my mind at the time that the price was high.

454. Who were the conveyances from the Maoris to?—Some were to the Queen. I think some of the Polhill Gully lands were sold to private persons also. There were so many contracts and deeds at the time that I cannot speak positively.

455. You remember these four being to the Queen?—Yes; I will tell you why I recollect these better than the others. There were four transfers I had to translate, and I was told that some of these transfers were going away, and it was not quite certain whether they would be signed or not; and I was to make my charge accordingly.

456. You have told us you did not know what it was being acquired for, but thought they were paying too much for it for building purposes: did it not strike you why the Queen should be wanting it for building purposes?—I did not know what they might want the land for. It was the impression on my mind at the time. There were other pieces of land being purchased in which the Queen's name was not mentioned.

457. Who were you employed by to explain the deeds to the Natives?—By Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson.

458. Did you understand the Government were the purchasers or Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson?—I simply understood what was stated in the deed—that it was purchased direct from the Natives to the Crown.

459. You were not aware that it was purchased by Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson?—I was not aware of any contract that Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson had with the Government, or that they were employed by the Government at all, except as solicitors, until I saw something in the newspapers about it being intended for a rifle-range.

460. You must have known if they were acting as between the Maoris and the Queen?—I knew that they were the solicitors, and that they were presumably acting for the Queen.

461. Who would you consider they were acting for?—I thought they were acting for the Government.

462. *Mr. Kirk.*] Were you employed by us in any other way except as interpreter?—Just to interpret in an ordinary way, and to explain any transaction placed before me. That was the only capacity in which I was employed. I had nothing to do with any agency, or in trying to get Natives to sell. Simply as an interpreter and witness to certain receipts.

463. Do you remember Tamati Hapimana coming and making his transfer?—Yes.

464. You were present on that occasion?—Yes.

465. Have you any recollection how the transaction was conducted, and how the monetary part of it was done?—Yes; the deed was read over to the Native, and the money was handed over to him.