

only possess a small area—only a few acres; but if these few acres are successful in upsetting this Bill I shall be exceedingly pleased.

78. How many acres do you hold?—Twenty acres—that is, my own personal share; 10 acres were my ancestors' burial-place.

79. Have you offered lately to sell your share to the Government?—Well, I heard it stated that the Government desired to purchase the island, and I had, in a conversation with Mr. Sheridan, offered it in a jocular way. I never had any real intention of selling. I went to Mr. Sheridan about another matter. I was selling a certain interest that I then held in Kawhia, and while there this conversation took place. It was never serious.

80. Who started the conversation about Kapiti Island?—I do not know. I did not place any importance on the conversation, otherwise I might remember.

81. If Mr. Sheridan had made an offer to purchase your holding at that time, would you have sold?—I do not know about that.

HANIKAMU TE HIKO examined.

82. *The Chairman.*] Will you please state what you have to say on the subject of this Kapiti Island Reserve Bill as briefly as possible? Yes; I shall not keep the time of the Committee very long, because there are two proposals that have been made to the witnesses that preceded me, and they have taken a firm hold of my ear. One of these was that the land should be made a reserve under certain conditions for the Natives, and the other was that other land should be given in exchange. Well, I now ask that an opportunity be given us to go into this matter, and consult amongst ourselves as to whether we should be prepared to accept.

83. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] Are you aware of negotiations going on for the sale of Kapiti to other persons than the Government—say, during the last year?—No; I have not heard that. I know that, as a matter of fact, the interests of certain owners in the island have been sold.

84. To whom were they sold?—I do not know to whom they were sold; I know the persons who sold them. Hohepa Horomona was one of the sellers.

85. *Mr. Heke.*] Do you know what areas have been sold?—Twelve acres each by these persons.

RAIHA PUHA examined.

86. *The Chairman.*] The Committee will be glad to hear what you have to say about this matter?—I speak about my own portion of the island, Waiorua Block. The previous witnesses have stated what they had to say about their own particular portion; but they have not said anything about mine. I will not agree to this Government Bill which proposes to seize and take from us our land. Of course, it means the whole island, and that includes my land; and as far as I am concerned I will not agree. If everybody else is going to sell, let them sell, but my land I shall keep for my child. I will not accept any money for it. My land will still remain mine, in the midst of that Government land. I need not say anything more to the Committee than this: that nothing will induce me to agree to the Bill.

87. *Mr. Monk.*] In reference to the inquiry made of the last witness by the Premier, I may ask if there have been any negotiations on the part of Europeans in Wellington to purchase the island which have taken place within the last twelve months?—I know of no such thing. My interest is under lease.

88. To whom?—To Mr. Morison, the lawyer.

89. How much is it leased to him for?—1s. 6d. per acre.

90. Is there any provision for his purchasing the land?—No, the only provision is that, if he finds that he is unable to pay the rent, the land is to come back to me.

91. For how long is the lease?—Twenty years.

92. When was it made?—In the winter of last year—1896.

93. *Mr. Parata.*] Does the lease include the right of purchase?—No, there is no purchasing clause in the lease. I am perfectly willing to produce the lease for the inspection of the Committee if they so desire.

94. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] What value do you put upon the land per acre?—I do not place any price upon the land at all. All that I desire to say is what I have said. I want some one to occupy the land and improve it.

95. Have there been any improvements put on the land by the present lessee?—Well, that has got nothing to do with me. He having leased the land it is for him to improve it; his sheep must be looked after; there are 400 acres. It is his business and interest to see that it is improved.

96. Has he got it stocked?—I do not know. All that I trouble myself about is to draw my money, and if he does not do anything with the land it is his fault.

97. If the Government gave you the same rent as Mr. Morison pays, what difference would it make to you?—Oh, no; because that would mean that my child would never see the land.

98. *Mr. Carson.*] Would you be willing to exchange the land for land elsewhere of equal value?—Well, I should be very exacting in my demand as to what should be a just equivalent for this land, and would have to be satisfied that I got all that I asked for before I agreed to accept it. Because this is a very sacred possession. Kapiti is a name famous in the mouths of the Ngaitoa; it has been connected with them for generations, and it is *tupuna* to my child.

99. You would be open to consider the matter?—I do not know.

100. *Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.*] I should like to get some explanation as to why you love the lawyer better than the Government?—That is my business.

101. Suppose the Government gave you 3s. an acre?—I would not let them have it if they offered me £1. It is a valued possession of our ancestors; and if the Government got hold of it, we should never see it again, and my son would never be able to look upon the land and say, "That is the island that belonged to my ancestors."