

113. Then practically the trustees do not know what the true position is?—That is so. We are quite prepared to have these accounts threshed out by expert men.

114. Now, can you tell us why the members of the Committee should be in the unfortunate position of having a Bill of great importance brought down to them at so late a date and just prior to the foreclosure of the bank?—Well, unfortunately, the trustees and bank people had not met before.

115. Do you not see the danger of getting a body of gentlemen who did not know anything about the subject to give a decision right off as to the best thing to do without their having time to read the Bill?—That is so.

116. Would there be no means of postponing the question so that we should have time to thoroughly investigate it?—I do not think so, this session, unless you postpone the sale.

117. Why do not the trustees and the bank come to a voluntary arrangement?—Well, that is what I have always endeavoured to bring about. I have always been anxious for a settlement, and have tried at various times to have this settled instead of having it frittered away in the law-courts, and everybody having a “cut in.”

118. *Mr. A. L. D. Fraser.*] To get at the actual position, Mr. Carroll: the original debt to the bank was larger than it is at present; the money owing to the bank was larger originally than it is at the present time—£160,000?—That was beyond my time.

119. Can you give the information? It is just as well to have all the information we can. And some of the properties were sold, and that is how the amount was reduced to the £58,000 mentioned by Mr. Malet?—Yes.

120. *The Chairman.*] What date was the £58,000 owing?—1892.

121. Is that when your trusteeship commenced?—Yes.

122. That is the original indebtedness referred to by Mr. Malet in his evidence?—About £68,000 with the stock mortgage. I may say that, as a result of that arrangement, which led to my appointment as trustee, the lands of the whole estate were being sold at that time by the Assets Company. It was a forced sale, and the Natives asked me to intervene, which I did, with the result that the bank desisted from selling the balance of the properties on that date. They suspended the sale about 2 o'clock. We got together and discussed the whole position; then they agreed, in order to save any legal trouble, that the balance of the lands should be handed over to Wi Pere and myself as trustees for the Natives, they taking a mortgage over the unsold lands for the balance. I have no interest whatever in the estate, and had none at that time. The Natives pressed me to take up the position, so to satisfy them I became trustee, and I have not been able to get out of the position since.

123. You stated, Mr. Carroll, that the Receiver appointed some six or seven years ago has been absolutely ignored by the bank, and his services have been absolutely wasted?—Yes.

124. And he has been kept employed for six or seven years, having nothing to do?—Oh, he has other lands to deal with as well.

125. Has he anything to do with the trust lands?—Not these, but other trust lands.

126. I am dealing entirely with the trust lands under discussion by the Committee. He has been engaged all these years, having nothing to do, at a salary of £500 a year?—Which he has never got. He was made Receiver by the Validation Court. He has been acting in that capacity, but without any recognition from the bank.

127. He has been practically doing nothing these six or seven years?—He has been carrying out his duties as imposed upon him by the Validation Court; but he has not been recognised in any way by the bank.

128. You and Mr. Wi Pere were appointed in 1892?—Yes.

129. And owing to your hands being tied your efforts have not been very successful?—That is so.

130. Well, under the powers of this Act, do you think that your efforts will be more successful in the future?—We have no powers under this Bill.

131. Under the powers that this Bill proposes to give to some body or person, do you think that their efforts will be successful?—If you mean, will any success result from the new order of things, I certainly think so.

132. Under this Bill you would be allowed to deal with the estate if you were still trustees?—Yes.

133. You said that you thought that this Maori Council would manage better than you and Mr. Wi Pere?—Well, I believe that they would be the best body under the circumstances.

134. Through Mr. Wi Pere and Mr. Carroll the Council formed for the East Coast is as follows: The Native Council consists of Messrs. Gill (who has been purchasing land for some time for the Government), Joyce (an ex-publican of Gisborne), Townley (Mayor of Gisborne), Ihi Potai, Epamaia Whanga, and Peni Hehi?—Yes.

135. And you tell the Committee, Mr. Carroll, knowing those men, that they are capable of managing a difficult estate like this?—Yes. Peni Hehi is now managing a large estate on the East Coast very successfully, and working it on co-operative lines.

136. You are aware that if this Bill passes, handing the estate over to the Council, that they have the full powers that they have under the Act of 1900 and its amendments?—Yes.

137. And you are aware, also, that the first power given to them in any estate put into their hands is to realise and get money to pay for the administration—that is, to pay themselves under section 43 of the Act of 1900?—We are not discussing the Act of 1900.

138. If it is handed over to the Council the jurisdiction of the Council is bound by the Act of 1900 and its amendments of 1901?—Very well.

139. So that they would have the full powers that they have in these two Acts?—Yes.

140. And with these powers you are of opinion that they would be a competent body to negotiate with the bank for a settlement?—Under all the circumstances they are the body I would say that these lands should be vested in.