

the key of Westland, because even if the harbour is at Point Elizabeth the boats must come back to go to Christchurch, and also to Nelson.

16. But do you not know that there is a strong feeling that when the railway is completed through to the West Coast that then Greymouth will not be such an important centre as it is to-day, because the Christchurch merchants will be able to do the business that the Greymouth merchants are now doing?—That may be for a while.

17. Have you considered all these points, of the property depreciating in value, and that it would be better to have sovereigns in the hands of the Public Trustee yielding a certain revenue that can never go down and never go up than to have a property that might go up and might go down? What do you think about that?—I do not think there is much chance of it going down. It might go down a little.

18. Supposing the sale of the Reserve were effected, and the Public Trustee were to invest, or offer to you the right to select or select for you certain areas of country, say, in the North Island, and invest the money in that: is there not a greater probability of such areas increasing in value than there is of the Greymouth Reserve increasing in value?—That may have been twenty years ago, when we could get plenty of good property for 10s. an acre.

19. You can get plenty of good land in the North Island which will increase in years to come?—Oh, no. What about Kawhia? You could get good land for 10s. an acre twenty years ago, but if you wanted a sheep-station now you would have to pay £5,000 or £6,000.

20. Do you not think that investing the money in land would be a better investment than leaving it in the Greymouth Reserve?—It would not be so sure as Greymouth.

21. There is a chance of it washing away with the floods?—I do not think so.

22. You have not lived in Greymouth for thirty or forty years?—I have seen the big floods there.

23. Have you ever seen any of the "old man" floods which came 4 ft. over this Reserve?—I was there at the time, and saw it at Arahura.

24. You did not see the Greymouth flood?—No.

25. You were not there when fourteen houses were washed over the wharf?—Well, it has changed since.

26. *Dr. Buck.*] I understand, in the opinion of your committee, that from the point of view of business there is a more certain return from this land, and you are inclined to stick to it; and, secondly, you think there is a certain amount of sentiment in regard to the remaining portion?—Yes.

JOHN TAINUI examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are one of the Natives interested in this Reserve?—Yes; and I desire to indorse what the last witness has said in regard to the meeting at Arahura. It was unanimously agreed not to sell. Of course, this land has descended down to us from our forefathers as our birthright. When the deputation came down to Hokitika, when Mr. Guinness, Mr. Coates, and others were present, I absolutely said before that deputation that the Public Trustee was our man, and we came here on this occasion to back him up. As to the money that would be paid, it would be better for us to stick to Greymouth instead of having the money, because we know very well that it was our forefathers who left it to us.

2. *Dr. Buick.*] Since your meeting, and what you have heard said before this Committee, you have not had any cause to change your view? You do not think you would benefit as regards the business transaction by selling?—No.

JOHN H. W. URU examined. (No. 10.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are also one of the Natives interested in the Greymouth Reserve?—Yes. I do not know, Mr. Chairman, that I can add anything more in regard to the Greymouth Reserve than what has already been said by Mr. Poynton and Mr. Beare. As far as we on the East Coast are concerned, we are unanimous not to sell Greymouth. We know we have a good asset in Greymouth, and we want to stick to it. If Greymouth is good enough for Mr. Guinness, and Mr. Coates, and the others, it must be good enough for us; so we strongly ask you and the Government that in the event of your accepting some proposal from these people that you will give us a chance first before you make any definite arrangement. We are like Mr. Coates; when he was asked why he did not go and benefit himself out of Greymouth, he said he was born there, and his father lived and died there; and we are like that. The land belonged to our fathers, and we would like to stick to it.

2. *Hon. Mr. Guinness.*] Are you one of the descendants of the original owners?—No, I am not.

3. You are only connected by marriage?—Yes, that is all.

4. Mrs. Uru is one of the largest owners?—Yes.

5. And you think, as her husband, that it would not be better, speaking from a monetary point of view, for her to get now that the chance is offering the value of this estate, and by the interest that would be got for that estate for her to get a larger income than what she is getting now?—It would be better for her now; but we look upon it from a monetary point of view. We have been waiting these twenty-one years for a rise. We are now just going to get it and you want to deprive us of the rise.

6. Supposing you get the rise, it is not going over the whole Reserve? As you know, a few leases expire this year, more in two or three years, some in ten years, and some in fourteen and fifteen years; so that it will be some time to wait for those expecting a rise?—Yes.

7. Have you considered that point?—No, we have not. We know this: that our leases are falling due, and we are bound to get the benefit of the rise as these leases fall due.