

dispossessed of the land for the sake of men who have no more right to it than we have? Most decidedly, I say, give every man his right.

88. I thought you said you went on to the land in 1907. Are you one of the men who built the roads and bridges?—Yes, I have. I have paid my share towards it.

89. You told me that you considered you were entitled to use all legitimate means?—Yes.

90. And then I asked you what would you say of a man who endeavoured to use political influence to get this matter through?—I say it is perfectly right to use all just means he can to get the matter through.

91. Perfectly right?—Yes, perfectly right.

92. I did not expect that answer from you?—Why?

93. Do you consider that that is the answer of a man who is entitled to represent any body of his fellows, whether they be lessees or not?—Yes, I do.

94. Well, I just want to refer you to this letter, of which, no doubt, you are proud. It will be for the Commission to judge whether it is a proper letter to have been written by you. The letter is as follows: "Taikatu Road, Auroa, 4th October, 1910.—Dr. Fitchett, Superintendent, Public Trust Office, Wellington.—DEAR SIR,—We purpose visiting Wellington once again to see if it is possible to obtain from the present Government a fulfilment of the promises made to us in regard to our leases. It seems to me that the Premier does not recognize the fact that he is dealing with men who have in the past willingly sacrificed their money or anything that would tend to the advancement of the Seddon or Ward party. It is therefore only natural we should feel the slight the Premier has put on us." That last part of the letter is written with a stroke at the side to call special attention to it?—Yes.

95. The letter proceeds, "You can rest assured that as the Government now stands it cannot afford to alienate 134 families and their followers for the sake of gratifying a Maori (Carroll). Further, let me emphasize the fact that nothing more fatal to the prosperity of this district could befall it than the dispossessing the present holders of their homes in favour of a pampered class."—That is true; a spoonfed class, I should have said.

96. But you said pampered class?—Yes.

97. "Who have not contributed a cent towards the advancement of the district, while they have enjoyed the fruits of our labour, and the results of the increased taxes we have been called upon to pay in the past to make up a deficiency that never would have existed if the lands now held by them (Maoris) had been in the occupation of white men"?—True again.

98. Although some of them pay rates?—True again. They have lived upon our improvements.

99. "While they have enjoyed the fruits of our labour"?—That is well put.

100. You were paying a rent to the Native of £55 6s. and reaping as the fruits of your labour £363 at least?—Yes, very good.

101. "I cannot believe that the Premier properly realizes the actual position"?—That is right.

102. "Or he never would trifle with us as he has. Trusting in your continued support, I remain, dear sir, yours obediently, DUNCAN A. POOLE, J.P."?—Yes, J.P.

103. I leave it at that. Did you get an answer to that letter?—No. I heard it had been filed.

104. You got no answer?—There was no necessity for an answer.

105. Well, I think there was the necessity for an answer, and a very stinging answer?—You do!

106. Yes, I do, but better than an answer in favour was no answer at all?—

107. *Mr. Kerr.*] The result of your inquiries from Mr. Blennerhassett was that you thought he had led you to believe that you had a right of renewal and full compensation for the improvements that had been effected upon the land?—Yes, sir.

108. And then you told us that you saw your solicitor, and that while you were going over the land assessing the value of improvements you told him to get the lease up from Wellington and consider it?—Yes, that is so.

109. What was it he had to consider?—Well, the lease was a good lease. I am not accustomed to law, and I would not dictate to a lawyer.

110. That is not the point: you were much concerned in ascertaining whether the lease provided for what Blennerhassett represented to you you were entitled to?—That would be right.

111. Would you not naturally ask your solicitor to tell you whether it conformed to the representations that had been made to you by Blennerhassett?—I do not know that I did. I thought if there was anything wrong with it my solicitor would have pointed it out.

112. You have told the Commission that you did not ask your lawyer to advise you as to whether or not it contained a right of renewal or whether you were entitled to full value for improvements?—I did not; I merely asked for his opinion.

113. On what?—On the lease as to whether it was good.

114. Do you wish us to understand that you did not put it to him that you wanted to know whether the lease contained a right of renewal? It seems an extraordinary thing that these representations should be made and you went straight to your solicitor without asking?—Yes.

115. One would naturally have to be advised as to whether you were getting what Blennerhassett represented?—But the lawyer knew well that the representations were made to me.

116. You told us he did not?—The agent, I remember, was in the office with me.

117. But you said the agents never made any representations to you at all?—To me, no.

118. It was the lessee who made the representations?—He made the representations. I do not know that the agents made any representations to me. Mr. Wake must have known of the whole thing. I may have told him what Blennerhassett's conversation was.