

RATANA HUPA sworn and examined. (No. 42.)

1. *Mr. Bell.*] You live near Opunake?—Yes.
2. Have you got some land in the Ngatitamaronga Block?—Yes. My cousin and I have each got 25 acres.
3. Under occupation license?—Yes.
4. And you have also got 45 acres near by under occupation license?—Yes.
5. When did you take up these lands?—I have the license here. The date of the license for the 45 acres is 25th May, 1899, and the 50 acres the same day.
6. What was the condition of those lands when you took them up?—Bush land, but there were 30 acres of fern and flax. The bush I cut down and the flax I sold to the mill. The fern was cut down and burnt and the land grassed.
7. Was the whole of the land grassed?—With the exception of 6 acres which I left for firewood. The whole of it is now in grass.
8. Who did the clearing?—I did myself, and on some occasions I had my brother's assistance.
9. Did you get any stock for it?—Yes, twenty young cattle.
10. Where did you get the money to pay for the stock?—From the proceeds of the flax, and from work that I did for Europeans and working on the road. The calves did not cost so very much—from 8s. to 10s.
11. When the calves grew up, what did you do with them?—I sold the males and the cows I milked.
12. How many cows were there?—I commenced with seven, and subsequently increased them to fourteen milking-cows, and then increased them to twenty-five.
13. How long was that after you started milking?—Three years. Subsequent to that I became ill, and I went shares with a European in the milking.
14. Were you too ill to milk yourself?—Yes, I was not strong enough. After milking for one year with this European on shares I was advised by a European friend that he was not doing right. He was enclosing the cows at night time in a very small paddock, and then milking in the morning, and letting them out. I stopped him from milking then, and sent the cows away.
15. Why did you not get your cousin to do the milking?—He was at Napier at that time.
16. For how long were you ill?—I was ill for some time. When I got well I started milking again.
17. When was that?—In September, 1910.
18. How many cows did you start with them?—I had sixteen cows.
19. Before you started milking I think you bought some land at Opunake?—Yes, three-quarters of an acre in Opunake.
20. Out of what money did you buy that section?—The proceeds of the sale of my cows.
21. What did the section cost?—Something over £100.
22. Have you still got it?—Yes.
23. Have you been offered any money for it?—Yes, now that the railway is supposed to go through a European has approached me and offered £140.
24. Did you accept it?—No, because it may reach £200 yet.
25. You told us you started in September, 1910, with sixteen cows?—Yes.
26. How did you manage to buy those cows?—I applied to a European friend of mine to procure me some cows from the auction, and that I would repay him by giving him half the milk cheque, and the money has all been paid back now.
27. Have you got any more cows besides the sixteen?—I sold a number of calves, and have eight heifers in calf.
28. Where do you send your milk to?—The Opunake Co-operative Company.
29. What was your biggest cheque the year you started?—£14. Of course, the cows were not particularly good.
30. What is your biggest cheque this year from the same sixteen cows?—£19 a month, from November to January.
31. Does your cousin work on the land with you?—When he returned from Napier he went on to his wife's land. He is not working with me, but let me use his land, and I make him a money gift in return. Of course, I pay the rates.
32. What is your cousin doing with his wife's land?—He is working on it, clearing the bush and building a house, and doing other work on the land. He will no doubt go in for milking by-and-by.
33. Is your neighbour a pakeha or a Maori?—A pakeha.
34. Is his farm in a better condition than yours?—I think mine is the best.
35. I think your wife has an interest in some other land?—Yes, in Ngatitara. There are five of them in 140 acres under occupation license.
36. Is it good land?—No, it is sandy, and when there is any wind at all the sand encroaches on the land.
37. How many acres of sand?—I should say about 40, and the rest of the land is good.
38. Was it cleared when your wife took it up?—It was in fern and flax, and was very subject to encroachment by sand.
39. When did your wife take it up?—The same year as mine. There are five of them in the license.
40. Did you do any work on that land?—I sowed sandgrass to keep the sand from encroaching.
41. What about the rest of the land? Was the fern cleared?—The flax was cut and sold, and the fern land we together ploughed and sowed and grassed.
42. What is being done on that land?—They have their cattle running there, and sometimes