

JOSEPH EDWIN DALTON sworn and examined. (No. 17.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—Licensed interpreter and Native agent.
2. *Mr. Jones.*] Mr. Dalton, you were living in Taranaki?—I was.
3. You have had a great deal of experience in Native matters?—Yes.
4. Do you remember the great meeting at Waitara when Sir George Grey and the Hon. Mr. Sheehan were there?—Yes, I was present at that meeting.
5. Do you remember the date?—It was in the later “seventies.” It is a long time to think back.
6. It was in 1878?—It was about 1878.
7. You knew Wetere Te Rerenga, of the Maniapoto Tribe?—Yes.
8. You knew Rewi Maniapoto, did you not?—I did.
9. He was, I believe, the great fighting chief?—That is so. He was the principal chief in the Waikato in those days, in what is known as the King-country.
10. From your knowledge of Native matters will you tell the Committee how those men came in—did they come in through my hands, or how? They crossed the *aukati* lines—the confiscated boundaries?—Of course, I can only speak from hearsay, but I understood at that time that you had a good deal to do with bringing Rewi Maniapoto into Waitara to meet Sir George Grey, who was then Premier of New Zealand, and Mr. John Sheehan, who was Native Minister. The name of that meeting was the Akarima.
11. What effect had that meeting upon the relationship between the European Government and the Natives?—It simply did away with the *aukati*. It enabled Europeans to come in.
12. It broke down the barrier?—Yes.
13. Do you remember at that time whether or not the Natives invited Dr. Hector, the Government Geologist, and took him up through their country—through Mokau—through me?—I do not remember that.
14. When I first entered into the deeds of lease with this property do you remember being at Mokau with Captain Messenger?—Yes.
15. The original deed?—The original deed.
16. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What year was that?—After I left Waitara I have not taken any interest in the matter.
17. *Mr. Jones.*] You have not seen me for twenty years or more?—No.
18. The contents of the deed provided for the formation of a company and for other things to be done?—If I recollect aright you leased the lands from the Natives, paying them a small rental and giving them a small amount in royalties, but I could not say what the amount was. I was there with Captain Messenger to see that things were done right. Mr. William Grace was the interpreter.
19. Now, upon that occasion, as a fact a considerable quantity of beer was taken into that settlement—it is stated in this document [Stout-Palmer Commission’s report]: do you know anything about that?—I cannot say there were considerable quantities of beer there.
20. There were several hundred Natives there?—Yes, any number of Natives from all round the Waikato.
21. Was not Mokau the first Court that was held at Waitara?—Yes.
22. During that period—I am now going from 1878 to 1882, and you had a good deal to do about Waitara and Mokau—did you ever hear from anybody or the Natives of any ill treatment of mine towards the Natives—any misconduct, any hardship inflicted, or anything whatever of that kind?—No.
23. I want you to draw a distinction between the document you assisted Captain Messenger to witness and a subsequent agreement. As you were there several years afterwards, did you know anything with regard to some Natives, unknown to Wetere Te Rerenga, throwing my coal into the river?—I have heard of it.
24. Were you not present in 1887 when the head chief of all came to me and said he was sorry that the Native people had torn my fences down and thrown my coal into the river?—I was present when the arrangement was made between you and Te Rerenga that the old agreement should be destroyed and you should enter into a new agreement. I heard about the trouble with the coal.
25. Will you kindly read this document out—read the Maori and then give us the interpretation of it?—“Mokau, 1st March, 1887.—Judge Wilson, greeting: The money for Mr. Jones’s lease, Mangapohue to the Heads, is £125. The old negotiations have been abandoned. Do you insert this in your document, and reply so that I may know. Ended. From WETERE TE RERENGA.”
26. Is that your writing—the interpretation?—I believe so.
27. Will you tell these gentlemen who Judge Wilson was?—He was Judge of the Native Land Court.
28. Was he a strict man?—Yes.
29. He would not stand any improper work, above all men?—No, I do not think so.
30. I wish the Committee to understand that this document refers to half the property—the big lease?—From the Heads to Mangapohue.
31. Here is another document securing the piece from Mangapohue to the eastern boundary. [Map referred to.] The line was struck after survey from Mangapohue. Then you will remember there were other blocks behind. That agreement you have just read only applies to half the land?—It fixes the boundary from Mangapohue towards the Heads.
32. Now, this is an agreement for the land up to Toroto; Piriheki is the boundary. Here is an agreement to pay them £100 per annum for this piece [shown on map]. That would be