

173. That is what you want, but it is not provided for in this Bill?—It is my constant prayer that this principle I speak of should be inserted in the Bill.

174. There is another point in connection with this: Do you think that the working of these Committees would fall into the hands mainly of young men who are active among the Maoris?—It might be that the Committees would be composed of the people you speak of, but these people would be elected by the whole of the owners: that is for the owners to consider who are the best people to be elected.

175. Would it not happen, in regard to this case of the Committees, that a practice somewhat similar to that which came into the Native Land Court would arise; that people who were not owners but were active men, accustomed to European ways, would be thought more capable than most other Maoris of acting?—Yes; very likely it would be so that the people you speak of would compete to be put on the Committees.

176. Do you not think that under that system greater grievances would occur to Natives than even under the past system?—I am repeating that the authority of dealing with the land must not be given to a Committee, it must be kept in the hands of the owners.

177. But the law will be all the other way?—I think this law must be altered to meet my view of the case.

178. But, if this law passes as proposed, will not the effect of that be in the direction I mention; and, if so, whether you think that desirable?—Evil will not result if it shall be, as I stated before, that the real authority over the land shall remain with the owners.

179. You have told us that the kind of people will be likely to be elected to the Committee who have been called on to conduct cases in the Native Land Court?—Yes; it is very likely that such people will be elected to the Committees.

180. Then I ask you whether it is, in your opinion, desirable that land should be handed over to be administered by that class of persons?—I will decide, before electing the members of the Committee, what sort of person he is; that is, it will be for me to decide whether he is fit to be intrusted with the management of my portion of the land.

181. Do you understand that the duty of the Committee will be to instruct the other bodies, which I am coming to speak of presently, and say to them the manner in which the land is to be disposed of?—I have not spoken in detail of the several clauses of this Bill.

182. It is very easy to read you the clause: it is the 23rd clause?—I said yesterday that I did not approve of that clause.

183. That is the work that the Committee has to do under this Bill—there is nothing else; that is their work?—I think the position should be this: that the owners of the land should direct the Committee what they wished to be done with the land. It will be the duty of the Committee to direct the Board as to what the wishes of the owners are.

184. Then do I understand that you do not approve of the Committee exercising this power which is put in the Bill?—I do not approve of that power being given to the Committee. I say that it must rest with the owners.

185. Well, that being done, do you understand that the power, after dealing with the land, goes into the hands of another body?—My answer would be that the Committee have power to hand over the land to the Board, provided it is the wish of the owners.

186. But you know the Bill does not require that?—I know that the Bill does not make that provision; that is why I say that that clause should be struck out and the alteration I have proposed made.

187. Do you understand that the Committee under that clause having exercised their full powers and dealt with the land, it then goes from them to another body?—Yes; I know that is the effect of it.

188. Do you also understand that the Board into whose hand it goes is to be composed, as provided in clause 8, of a Commissioner appointed by the Governor, of the Chairman of the Native Committee of the district, and another person who is also to be appointed by the Governor—three people?—Yes.

189. Do you approve of it?—I have heard that that is the case.

190. But do you approve of it?—I have no objection to the Board being composed of those persons, provided the whole of the owners, in the first place, instruct the Committee what is to be done with the land; then the Committee instruct the Board to carry out these directions.

191. Then you agree to handing over the land to this Board of management?—I agree, with this reservation, that they must carry out the wishes of the people.

192. You are insisting all through on something which is not the case?—I am only speaking of what I wish done with my own land.

193. I do not want to weary, but I would like to ask you to go to the last part of the Bill, in which great powers are given to what is called the Governor in Council?—I am not at all weary, but I would like to have a smoke.

194. Have you looked to the provisions in Part IX. of the Bill. The interpreter will read to you clauses 62 and 63. What do you think of those provisions; do you agree to them?—I have now heard of this for the first time. I am not in the habit of reading myself; my impression was from hearsay, that the powers conferred on the Governor in Council were simply to carry out the wishes of the people—that is, of the owners.

195. There is only one other subject that I wish to ask you any question about, but it is a very important one?—But how can one man himself deal with such a great fish as this; I think that the whole House had better deal with it.

196. It is because we have an important person before us that we are anxious to get his opinion. What I want you to give your opinion about is, whether you think the Native people would be prepared to consider, in the policy of such a measure as this dealing with their lands, they would prefer that it should be dealt with as formerly, under what is called the right of pre-emption