

257. Now, supposing there are some who object to the land being disposed of—that is, a minority who object; what is to be done then? Take the case put by yourself? There are fifty owners, and five who object to the disposal of the land; what is to be done?—Suppose there are forty-five who agree, and five who disagree; then the shares of these five should be cut off.

258. That is the point I want to come at. How is it to be cut off? who is to define the boundaries?—Apply to the Native Land Court to make the subdivision.

259. Then the whole affair must be held in abeyance until the Native Land Court has made the subdivision?—Yes.

260. Are you content that the Native Land Court should do this work?—Yes, the Board must call on the Court to do this.

261. And the disposal of the block must be held in abeyance until the Court completes its work?—Yes.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce*: What I have been trying to bring out is simply whether the whole of the owners must join in the disposal of the block before that disposal is proceeded with. I think he has made that tolerably clear.

262. *Colonel Trimble*.] You have told us that in the amendments proposed by Wi Pere, the wishes of the Natives are carried out; am I right in that supposition?—So far as they go; but there are additional amendments proposed by Wahanui.

263. Suppose that Parliament refuses to adopt the amendments proposed by Wi Pere, how will the Natives stand then in regard to the original Bill as brought down by the Government?—I should like to ask why should not Parliament agree to these amendments.

264. That is not the point; Parliament will be guided by what it thinks right: some of the amendments might be adopted and others objected to. But supposing it throws out the amendments of Wi Pere, what then will be the position of the original Bill in your mind?—Our opinion is this: that if Parliament does not accept the proposed amendments the Bill should be withdrawn and held over until next year, so that the whole of the Natives in this Island should have an opportunity of considering what ought to be done.

265. Are you speaking for yourself alone or giving the opinions of the Maoris you have come in contact with since you came to Wellington?—I am speaking on behalf of myself and the people of all the Island.

266. Are you speaking also on behalf of the Wairarapa Natives as well as for yourself?—Yes.

267. Then am I quite clear in understanding you to say that, supposing the amendments now proposed by the Natives are not adopted by Parliament, you wish the whole matter postponed until next session?—Yes.

268. With regard to these amendments which you refer to as proposed by Wahanui, the first thing I want to know is whether you have seen them, for they are not before the Committee yet?—I have seen them.

269. Do you include these amendments with the amendments of Wi Pere as essential to the settlement of this question?—Wahanui can speak for his own amendments; I am only insisting upon those which Wi Pere has brought forward.

270. I want to know whether you are quite clear as to what I am saying. Do you think it essential to have the amendments of Wi Pere, and also, on behalf of the Natives, do you consider the amendments of Wahanui to be essential to their interest?—Yes; they should be added to Wi Pere's.

271. I cannot ask you about Wahanui's, because they are not before us. But you say that you have seen them. I put this question now in order to save time, so that we need not bring you up here again. Do you approve of those amendments of Wahanui's or not?—I approve of the amendments proposed by Wahanui.

272. *Mr. Ormond*.] Do you specially go with that part of Wahanui's condition that the tribe should really control the whole proceedings of the Committee and the Board?—Yes.

273. Do you think that would be an essential condition?—Yes; I approve of that principle and the amendments which we wish inserted to meet that case.

274. Wi Pere's amendments do not meet that case; Wahanui's goes further than Wi Pere's?—Our amendments provide that the owners of land should give directions in writing to the Committee and the Board as to how the land is to be dealt with. That is our wish.

275. Then he thinks it is the wish of his people to have Wahanui's condition included with Wi Pere's?—Yes.

276. I want to ask you now something about the working of the Committees. I understand you come from Wairarapa; what part do you come from?—I live at Te Uhiroa, near Greytown.

277. I suppose that, living there, you have some experience of the working of the Native Land Court?—Yes, I have.

278. Have you been concerned yourself in cases in the Land Court?—I have not been affected largely by the proceedings of the Land Court, but I have seen its effects on other people.

279. But you have a knowledge of its operation in general?—Yes; I have looked on and seen its effect: sometimes there was great trouble over it, and quarrelling, and the land was given to the wrong people, and things of that sort.

280. While you have been watching these things you have seen the operation of the Court, and you must know that when the Court is inquiring into title it has the owners before it, and that it is upon the evidence of the owners that it awards to the grantees. That is the object of the Court to ascertain the owners of the land?—The owners are appointed after, and upon the evidence of those who have been before the Court.

282. Then the outcome of the position has been, under the law, that the Natives have named so many to represent them as owners of the land—some number under ten?—It was the Court or the Judge who said there should be ten in the grant to the Maoris; the Maoris did not have any check.