

283. It was the law?—Yes; I believe it was the Parliament.

284. Have you not known cases where these ten have been fixed by the consent of all the Natives concerned as the persons in whose names the grant was to be made?—Yes; but the law provided that these ten people were to be trustees for the bulk of the owners; but trouble has come on these people from outsiders getting it.

285. But you must have known plenty of cases in which ten have been appointed by consent of all the owners?—I know of many cases where ten persons have been appointed, and these ten people have sold the land on their own responsibility.

286. Do you know of any cases in which persons have been put into the grant who were not really owners of land, but were put in out of compliment—that is, they were put in to manage because they were clever people?—I do not know.

287. Perhaps I can suggest a case. Do you know Karaitiana?—Yes, I knew him.

288. Do you not know of cases round the Seventy-Mile Bush, for instance, in which Karaitiana went into the lands in that way which I have described?—I heard that Karaitiana was put in on account of ancestry.

289. Do you not know of any case where he was put in from the point of view I am asking about?—I do not know of any such cases.

290. But you do know of the cases of Natives appointing ten to act for them?—I know that Parliament passed a law that only ten could be put into the grant.

291. You have told us that you know of cases where all the owners agreed that these ten persons should go into the grant as trustees for them?—Yes; it was on account of the consent of the tribe that those ten were put in.

292. Do you know of cases where the ten disposed of the land without reference to any people outside them—the ten?—Yes, I do.

293. I understand that that has been one of the great grievances under the Native Land Court system—the disposal of the land by the persons who were put in as trustees?—Yes; that was one of the evils of the Native Land Court in the past.

294. Well, if that be so, if these ten people who have been appointed by the Natives have, as you admitted, so dealt with them in the past, do you not consider there is considerable risk of handing over some of the property, or, perhaps, the greater portion of the property, by this Committee elected in the same way?—I do not think the cases are analagous, because the Court does not place any restriction on the functions of the ten people.

295. What restriction do you think there will be on the Committee when seven are appointed under the Bill as it is now?—Our amendments provide for restrictions to be placed on the functions of the Committee.

296. But do you understand that this Bill will allow them to deal with the land more effectively than the ten would under the Crown grant, or, at least, quite as effectively?—Yes; we know that that is the case in the Bill as it stands; but we ask these clauses to be struck out, and our amendments inserted in lieu of them.

297. Then you do not want to give the Committee any absolute power to deal without continual interference from the body of owners?—I say that the Committee have authority.

298. Then, do you think they should have that authority to deal with the land without the overruling power that Wahanui talked of yesterday?—Our idea is, as Wahanui put it, that the Committee must first receive directions in writing from the owners of the land.

299. But supposing that they have those directions, but getting afterwards the power, what is to hinder them, as has been done by grantees in the past, acting in opposition to the wishes of the owners?—The action of the Committee would be overruled by the owners if the owners saw that they were doing wrong. They would elect the Committee.

300. But they have already done that; they have already acted under the powers which they take under the Bill?—The Committee are not to do anything until they have received written instructions from the owners saying that they can lease or sell, as the case may be.

301. Unless that is in the Bill you would not agree to the principle of the Committee acting?—I say that this provision might be inserted in the Bill; then it will be time to elect the Committee.

302. *Mr. Hobbs.*] I wish to ask you, in respect of the land, do you think the Natives should be allowed to sell to the highest bidder, or should the Government retain the right to purchase—that is the pre-emption right?—It should be entirely a question of the highest price.

303. Then you would not agree to any restriction of that kind, such as making the Government the sole purchaser?—That was the law formerly.

304. But I want to know whether you approve of that; that was the law under the Treaty of Waitangi?—Under that law no great trouble came on the Natives; it is only lately, since the Native Land Court has been appointed, that the Natives have been injured.

305. Have you not agreed to that?—I have not agreed to it.

*Mr. Ormond:* Put it this way. Does he or does he not? It could not be more fairly put.

306. *Mr. Hobbs.*] Do you agree to it?—I do not agree.

307. *Hon. Mr. Bryce.*] Let me press this a little further. The present law is that the Maoris may sell direct to private Europeans. Do you think that that system ought to continue; that is, that they may sell direct, not through the Native Land Court, but to sell direct?—I think the whole of the owners should hand over the land to the Committee and Board, and that they could sell to the Government if they thought fit.

308. *Colonel Trimble.*] You have stated that you spoke for yourself and also for the Natives of Wairarapa in reference to this Bill?—Yes.

309. I wish to ask you whether you had a meeting in Wairarapa to consider the original Bill?—Yes, we did; and two of us were directed by our tribe to come here and bring with us the result of our deliberation.