

without the authority of Parliament, and that, we maintain, is a good reason why the management should be taken out of his hands and given into the charge of the Natives. I do not know whether I shall be able to get some of the Native witnesses down to prove these points. I may have to ask that some assistance shall be given to them, because, owing to their not getting the rents, they have no funds to enable them to come down and give evidence before the Committee. I do not know how many witnesses we can get down. I shall be able to show that the Reserves Trustee, under his power of subdividing and ascertaining the shares, has acted in direct opposition to the wishes of the Natives in the hapus, and they ask for a more satisfactory state of affairs. I also intend to show that a large number of these Natives have absolutely no land to cultivate for their support. So far as the practical figures are concerned, I believe that the Native grantees of the whole district have something like forty acres each—thirty-nine acres, I believe. I intend to ask that the evidence of Tairoroma and others before the Native Affairs Committee of the House last session be put in. Another point is that there are a number of Natives who have been left out of the grant altogether, who are dependent on their relatives and friends; so that, although it may appear that there are thirty-nine acres a man, 25 per cent. is leased to Europeans, leaving what some would consider an ample supply, and in many cases, though some may have more than they require, others have not, owing to their relatives and friends who are not in the grant being dependent on them. There are something like sixty in one case depending on about five acres of land for cultivation, and they are almost in a state of absolute pauperism.

13. *Mr. Stewart.*] What do you propose?

*Mr. Sinclair.*] We ask that further reserves be made, or, if that is not practicable, that a certain portion of the land leased be taken from the lessees, under the Public Works Act, and restored to the men who have no land, so that others shall not have half a dozen dependent on them. The Public Trustee, in apportioning the shares, has not been impartial. In one case a half-caste in the South Island has something like 70 acres. I was personally present at a Subdivision Court when Judge Puckey was unable to ascertain in a single instance how the shares could be subdivided, and he ruled that he could not accept the evidence, and he recommended that special legislation be passed giving the Native Land Court power to deal with the lands and have a discretion in the matter—that is, so far as they could be practically guided by Native custom and usage. That was his chief reason for refusing to go on with the subdivision cases. Evidence will follow to bring these matters out.

14. *Mr. Stewart.*] With regard to the last point raised, that there are other parties interested in the land not in the Crown grant and not recognised by the Public Trustee, you do not ask the Committee to enter upon an investigation of that kind here?

*Mr. Sinclair.*] We ask that the reserves not yet granted be granted, and the work of the West Coast Settlement Commission be brought to an end. We ask for a measure giving us the power of control over our own lands again, because we cannot come up again session after session. We do not ask you to go into individual cases, but into the whole of the grievances set forth generally in our petition.

MONDAY, 14TH JULY, 1890.

JOHN HISLOP examined.

15. *Mr. H. D. Bell.*] You are the holder of a lease from the Public Trustee?—Yes.

16. Did you act as arbitrator to fix the rent of one of the confirmed leases?—Yes.

17. Which one was that?—Okahu, I think.

18. By whom were you appointed?—By the Natives.

19. Who was appointed by the lessee?—Mr. Nolan.

20. Whom did you select as umpire?—Mr. Livingston. If you will allow me, I should like to make a statement as to how my appointment came about. I felt some delicacy in acting, as I also held a Native lease. I happened to be in Wellington, and on going back, on arriving at Hawera, Mr. Rennell said that the Natives had appointed me to act on their behalf. I pointed out the delicacy I felt in the matter. He said the Natives would not name anybody. At length Mr. Rennell put the question again to the Natives whether they had no one they could trust? They said "Yes," and named myself. I said that, under the circumstances, and as it was the express wish of the Natives, I would act, but that I felt a delicacy in doing so notwithstanding.

21. You sat, then, in the arbitration? Where?—Yes; in Normanby.

22. Do you recollect what the original rent was?—I cannot say exactly. I am here only, as it were, by accident. I did not know that I was to be examined. I am therefore unprepared to answer all questions in detail. What I remember in this case—I can only speak from memory—at present is that this was a lease that commenced at a certain rental and increased after a certain number of years.

23. Did you and the other arbitrators differ?—Yes.

24. Do you remember what rent you fixed per acre?—Roughly speaking, it was 6s. 9d. or 6s. 9½d. I fixed according to a percentage upon the capital value.

25. What did Mr. Nolan fix it at?—I think it was 5s. 6d. or 5s. 9d.; there was a considerable difference.

26. What did Mr. Livingston fix it at?—It was referred to him then, and he fixed it at 6s. 6d.

27. That was a reduction on the original rent?—Yes.

28. Have you any means of knowing in what way the costs of the arbitration were arrived at?—No. I understood that Mr. Livingston and Mr. Nolan charged three guineas a day. For myself, I only charged one guinea a day.

29. Do you know what proportion of the expenses were to be paid by the Maoris?—In my award I made it clear that, as it was for the benefit of the leaseholder, the leaseholder should pay all expenses of the arbitration.