

216. Now, as to Equitable Owners Bill?—I do not remember about that Bill.

217. Do you not know that you voted against the Horowhenua Block clauses?—Very likely; I should disapprove of the Committee clauses.

218. Can you name any other project that Mr. Rees had?—The Validation of Titles. I do not think the present Act goes deep enough. I was not content with the Native Land Court; we wanted a more powerful Court than the Native Land Court.

219. In 1892, do you remember the report being agreed to by you and Rees, and others, that Native Trusts should be first fixed?—Yes.

220. Did you see in the Native Land Bill, introduced by Mr. Cadman, that there should be a Board?—I do not remember. I should say that that was not Mr. Rees's proposal.

221. Do you remember the Board being talked of?—I objected to it; I should try to prevent the House agreeing to the Board.

222. *Re-examined by Mr. Rees.*]—I have heard that there is one case under the Validation of Titles Act. It has been on three months, and not finished, I understand.

223. About Native committees. Did you ever know of committees being proposed, except to be regulated by law and the Government?—I should say that was your proposal.

224. Do you know of anything being done about Native Trusts last session?—No; I have not looked the matter up.

225. ALEXANDER HERBERT MACKAY, examined by Mr. Rees.] Am clerk in the Native Land Court. I produce Court-book containing original hearing of Umutaoroa Block. [Exhibit 41 for defendant; two Native Land Court Minute Books, and file of papers *re* Umutaoroa.] It is under heading Manawatu No. 3, page 185, Volume ii. It is Mr. Courtney's book. It was the Gisborne District, though now the Wellington District. This is the order—10th September, 1870—made under the Native Land Act, 1865: No restriction on alienation. Piripiri formed part of the same block.

226. Can you state whether any proceedings have been taken under the Equitable Owners Act in regard to Piripiri?—Yes; on 17th September, 1892, at Danevirke. The case was heard by the Native Land Court.

227. What was the result?—123 names, including the ten grantees, were put on the order. That is 113, besides names, were admitted.

228. Was there application made under the Umutaoroa Block?—I think not. I have no note about the Equitable Owners Act; only partitions. I did not go so far back as 1889.

229. Do the books show why no Crown grant was issued under the Act of 1865?—It would be delayed because of the plan wanting approval.

230. The proceedings as to Manawatu No. 3—whole block, 27,000 acres.

The Registrar read documents:—

Application for removal of restrictions, December, 1888. Majorities of owners under clause 5 of Act of 1888, Umutaoroa Block.

Letter accompanying application, April, 1889, by James Irvine to Native Minister.

Telegrams: W. C. Smith, 23rd June, 1889—"Has Governor signed?" Reply to him from Lewis, Under-Secretary, 24th June—"Has been affirmed."

Lewis, memorandum to the Minister—"Equitable Owners Act does not apply."

Application to bring land under Equitable Owners Act.

Letters, Sainsbury and Logan, to Clerk, Native Land Court. Report of Mr. Locke, M.H.R.

Application, in Maori, to deal with land under Equitable Owners Act.

Documents produced by Mr. Stowe, Clerk of the Legislative Council.

Minutes of Committee meetings.

231. WILLIAM LEE REES, examined by Mr. Lusk.] Am Member of the House of Representatives for Auckland City. Have been so since December, 1890. Am Chairman of Committees.

232. Will you tell us your chief reason for entering the House?—I have been attempting for years to get some order out of the confusion existing in regard to Native lands. After the appointment of the Commission, I became still more fully aware of the state of the Native land laws. The first session there was no time to do anything as to Native land laws; but in that session a promise was made that there should be a Commission. A Commission to myself, Mackay, and Carroll, was issued. Commission visited the whole of the tribes of the North Island, and took evidence of the chiefs that could give evidence, and also Europeans. There is a copy of the report in the Appendices. There is a plan attached to the report as to where we went. We examined all the members of the legal profession and ex-Judges. We examined all we could. We were occupied four months. Travelling-expenses were paid, nothing further. We presented report 23rd May. Mr. Mackay's report substantially same as other. Carroll put a foot-note objecting to the pre-emptive right being vested in the Crown. That report was sent to the Governor.

233. Was effect given to that report?—Not the slightest. I do not believe it has been considered. It has not, so far as I am aware. No discussion evoked in the House. At the opening of the session of 1891, a statement was made in the Governor's Speech about the report.

234. Were any Native meetings held during the session?—Yes; and passed resolutions about their lands and disputes. They are summarised in the letters read before the Joint Committee, and read to the jury. In session of 1891 a Native Land Bill was introduced by Mr. Cadman. I think this is the Bill: 227 clauses. It was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses. I was member of the Joint Committee. So far as Maoris are concerned, they did not like the Bill at all. I thought it made matters worse. It put more arbitrary power in hands of Judges and Ministers. All the Maori members spoke against it. The Joint Committee protested against the Bill being passed; but if a Bill embodying their suggestions were brought in, they would support it. The Bill made