

is no business of yours—that is purely a matter between me, the trustee, and the beneficiary.” I think with that we can leave the lessees out of this consideration altogether, and take it purely as a matter between the nation on the one hand and the Maori on the other. Now, I have suggested that the nation entered into a bargain to give the Native the right to compete—that is to say, it said, “Those are the terms of settlement,” and the Native said, “Yes.” We are bound to give the Native the right to compete. Before the nation fails to carry out that obligation must not the nation show that something has occurred since then to make it against the Native’s interest that the bargain should be carried out. Now, perhaps the nation is right to inquire as to whether anything has occurred, and the Natives welcome that inquiry. I have no evidence to meet on the subject, because you will remember that the lessees whom I cross-examined on the question admitted that they knew of many Natives farming lands satisfactorily in this district, and that is the whole of the evidence on this subject except for some statements that Natives have leased to pakehas lands which they had under occupation licenses. Now, I do not propose to tax your Worships’ patience by reviewing the evidence which I propose to call. I just want to say shortly what I think that evidence will show. Now, originally the Natives in this district had at least some reputation for wheat-growing. That was before the troubles with Titokowaru and the other Natives. Then there was the Taranaki war, and if your Worships will refer to the reports of the Bell-Fox Commission you will see that, owing to some extraordinary instances of mismanagement when we were endeavouring to settle our Taranaki difficulties, we were slowly alienating Te Whiti, and that Commission says that Te Whiti had been anxious to help us, had been an influence for good with the Maoris, and that it was due to our own mistakes that Te Whiti was slowly becoming alienated from us. Then after the settlement Te Whiti and Tohu retired to Parihaka, and they were never satisfied to recognize the confiscation. They sat and brooded over the taking of what they said were their lands, and they had a very large following indeed. That was the Parihaka movement, and the Parihaka movement kept the great body of Natives from a real desire to forge ahead until some two or three years ago, when Te Whiti and Tohu died. Until they died Parihaka was crowded with Natives listening to the word of Te Whiti, and the word of Te Whiti was always, “Have nothing to do with the pakeha while the pakeha remains in occupation of your lands.” In fact, such was the influence of that teaching that many of the Natives, while Te Whiti and Tohu lived, refused, I believe, to accept their rents. There are still some who refuse to accept; but since Te Whiti’s and Tohu’s death the number has been very greatly reduced. Since Te Whiti’s and Tohu’s death great changes have taken place amongst the Maoris. They are now for the first time sending their children to school; they are now for the first time voting in large numbers at parliamentary elections. Parihaka is practically deserted, and there has been formed—and this is to me the most interesting feature of all—there has been formed a union with a wide membership amongst these Maoris. That union contains amongst its leaders men who have always been leaders of the Maoris, and many men who were of authority under Te Whiti and Tohu. Now, that union is not the outcome of the preaching of Te Whiti; it is not a union purely or at all for the sake of agitating against the pakeha; it is a union formed not only to protect the Natives’ interests with regard to their lands, but also to protect the Native race in this part of New Zealand from decaying. The teachings of that union are sobriety and work, and I understand that I shall have some evidence of the very wide effect which the teaching of that union has had upon the Maoris in this district. There is a general bestirring of the Maoris here, and generally a genuine effort to forward the Native race. They are looking eagerly to the time when they shall have the chance of competing for their own lands; they are even asking that the freehold of those lands shall be given to them. I think they realize that before the nation abandons the trusteeship which it undertook the nation must be satisfied that the beneficiary is of age, and they think that they are even now in a position to convince their trustee that they are of age. That is not the point we have to deal with, but that is the state of the Maori mind to-day. Now, the evidence which I shall put before you will indicate to you, I think, that if they are again to be subjected to a breach of trust, if they are again to be deprived of the right of competing for their lands, this movement will die, and it will mean the driving-back of the Native into the condition of a mere rent-receiver; and all authorities agree that if anything is to be done with the Native race it must be done by encouragement to work. Now, if the Native, as I have suggested, would be entitled to compete unless the nation could show that something had occurred since 1881—that the state of the Maori was so different now from what it was then that it would be against the Native interests to allow him to compete, how strong is the case if my evidence will show your Worships that not only is the Maori not less able to look after himself now than he was in 1881, but that, in fact, he is more able? Now there are, roughly speaking, 5,000 Natives interested in this land in the West Coast Settlement Reserves. The acreage under the 1881 Act is 18,000, and there are about 50,000 acres more, some of which are under occupation license. That makes a total of 68,000 acres if these 1881 leases are to be put up for public competition and are to be counted with the lands already reserved—68,000 acres amongst 5,000 Natives. That is an acreage of about 13½ acres per Maori. Is that excessive, when the white man has anything from 110 to 550 acres? The maximum the pakeha may have is 640 acres. Now, while I am at this stage I might just deal with the argument which I understand my friend may use, that some of the land under occupation license has been sublet by the Natives to pakehas. The reason is obvious: the Maori is without finance, and you have had abundant evidence that without considerable expenditure this land cannot be made profitable. I shall call the evidence of Natives who have had land under occupation license, and who have sublet it to the pakeha with a view to getting the bush off and the fences erected. I shall show you that in some cases, at any rate, the land has been sublet for no rent, on condition that the bush is felled and that it is fenced. Now, is not that a case of the Native looking ahead? If the Native intended to be purely a rent-receiver, would he stand out of his rent for four, five, or six years, with a view to getting back his farm improved? I