290,000 acres of land, and the Natives are still sending in applications as fast as they can find money to pay for the surveys. I may safely state that at no distant period every acre of land in that Province will be held under grant from the Crown.

In the majority of cases no restriction on alienability was imposed, the grantee having abundance of other land. Where such was found not to be the case, the land was made inalienable. Several long standing land disputes have been settled, which on more than one occasion had nearly led to bloodshed, and the bitter feeling engendered by such disputes is gradually dying out, by the removal, through the action of the Court, of the causes which gave rise to it.

Apart from the question of surveys, I cannot say that I have experienced any difficulty in the practical working of the Native Lands Act of 1865, except what may have arisen from clause twenty-three limiting the number of grantees to ten persons, but this difficulty has in each instance been easily overcome; and as one great object is to induce the Natives to individualize their titles as far as possible, I think it would be inadvisable to alter it.

In the districts above referred to the Natives have not as yet made any application for a subdivision of their lands in those cases where a grant has been issued to several, nor have they shown any inclination, as far as I am aware, to possess or cultivate individual farms. The lands passed through the Court in the Hawke's Bay Province have for the most part been leased in large blocks for sheep and cattle runs, from which the owners derive large yearly incomes. Having thus abundant means of purchasing whatever they require, they do not appear to devote much time to cultivation as a means of subsistence, and only grow what is requisite for their own consumption.

In the Coromandel District the most of the land passed through the Court has been sold to settlers in small blocks, as sites for shops, homesteads, and sawing stations.

The Natives never have cultivated extensively in this district, it being for the most part hilly and densely wooded. In agricultural districts, I think it will be found that they will endeavour to acquire individual farms.

I have, &c.,

HENRY MONRO,
Judge, Native Lands Court.

The Chief Judge, Native Lands Court.

No. 5.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. W. B. WHITE to Mr. FENTON.

SIR,— Native Lands Court, Mangonui, 5th July, 1867.

With reference to your letter of 10th June, 1867, No. 521, I have the honor to report that I have found little difficulty in the working of "The Land Act, 1865." During the many years I have been in this district I have had much to do with the Native lands, and had in a measure prepared the way by assisting to define the boundaries of the various Native claimants. The surveys have been generally backward, but the chief cause has been in the poverty of the Natives. They are in many instances unable to pay for the survey and the expenses of the Court, which has deterred them from bringing so many cases before the Court as they otherwise would have done.

Many of the grants issued have been avowedly obtained to enable the owners to sell to Europeans. Those which have been obtained for their own use the proprietors are living upon, but have not been subdivided as yet. The Act itself is simple and easily worked, but it appears to me that, taking into consideration the very great desirability of inducing the Natives as speedily as possible to hold their lands under title from the Crown, that every inducement ought to be held out to them by the Government to obtain grants.

I would, therefore, abolish all fees upon inalienable property, except the fee for the Crown Grant, and when the property is alienable an extra fee should be charged by the Treasurer on the transfer. When agreements to sell lands have been entered into before the survey, it is probable the purchasers have agreed with the sellers to pay the Court expenses. But the expenses deter the Natives from coming before the Court, unless they have previously agreed to sell the land. I would also suggest that the 74th clause should be altered so as to enable a conveyance to be made to a person on the attestation of a duly qualified interpreter, before a Judge or a Justice of the Peace, that the translation was correct, and was understood by the conveyor, instead of requiring all the parties to make the transfer in the presence of a Judge or Justice of the Peace. I have known persons to wait two months at Whangaroa before the necessary forms could be complied with,—no Justice being resident in the district, and the expense incurred by requiring a number of Natives to travel a considerable distance is looked upon as a hardship. In this district the Natives have shown great anxiety to place as many names on the grant as possible, which, of course, adds considerably to the expense when they are required to go to a distance to transfer their property.

I have, &c.,

W. B. WHITE,
Judge, Native Lands Court.

The Chief Judge, Native Lands Court.