

shown would have been different. There would have been no threats, no intimidation, nor any objection made to any evidence I might have wished to give.

AUCKLAND, 10TH MARCH, 1891.

PARATENE NGATA sworn and examined.

232. *Mr. Rees.*] Do you know of any cases in which Europeans have dealt fairly with the Natives in regard to their land, but in which difficulties have arisen by reason of the complicated state of the law, and through certain of its conditions not having been thoroughly fulfilled?—I cannot give a definite reply to that, because I am not clear as to what particular lands have been dealt with fairly between Europeans and Maoris, and yet in respect to which the law has been broken. The people who will be able to speak on that point are those who are immediately concerned in such transactions.

233. Do you know of cases between Europeans and Maoris in which there are complicated titles, and in which allegations of unfair dealing are made by the Natives?—I am not personally aware of any such cases; but I have heard Natives make accusations to that effect—that their lands have been improperly obtained by the Europeans.

234. Do you know of cases where it has become difficult by reason of the law itself to settle complete titles between the Natives and the Europeans?—I am aware of lands that are in that position. One block with which I am acquainted is the Anaura Block. The difficulties in connection with that land are owing to the laws. That land was granted to certain people, who were trustees for the owners. The great body of the owners of that land derive no benefit from it. They are placed on the certificate as registered owners, while a few persons are included in the certificate of title as trustees. These trustees of the Anaura Block lease land to the Europeans, and they receive the rents and keep them. That is a matter that is absolutely within my own knowledge. I know of the case, because I have been one of those persons who distributed the rent amongst the Natives. The people who own that land derive no benefit whatever from it. That trouble is owing solely to the state of the law. There is no law that provides for the trustees being looked after, and for seeing that they do their duty properly.

235. Then, in such cases as the Anaura Block, do you think it would be a good law that those ten people—or whatever other number they may be—who receive the rents should be by the law compelled to distribute them, and that a Government officer, appointed for the district, should be responsible for their distribution amongst the people?—I am very strongly of opinion that a law such as you mention should be passed, that a Government officer be appointed, and that in all such cases as the Anaura case he should act in concert with either the ten people named on the certificate or, in the case of land not yet through the Court, in concert with the Committee, so that the rent derivable from the land would be distributed fairly and properly amongst the owners.

236. Do you think that law ought to be universal—that wherever ten people, or any other number, appear on the face of the grant, a Government officer should be appointed to receive these moneys, and to see that they are fairly distributed?—I am strongly of opinion that in all cases where lands have passed the Court, and where ten people have been appointed as trustees in the past, as well as with reference to cases that may arise in the future, a Government officer should be appointed to act in concert with the ten people in the grant, or, in new cases, with the Committee.

237. *Mr. Mackay.*] To see that the rents are equitably distributed?—To see that the rents would be distributed fairly, and that, in cases of sale, or in reference to any transactions whatsoever, the Government officer would act in concert with either the ten people in the grant or with the Committee, as the case might be, who had been chosen to see that the money was equitably distributed amongst the parties entitled to receive it.

238. *Mr. Rees.*] In cases where there are large areas of land and large numbers of owners, do you think it would be wise that, instead of cutting off each individual's portion and spending money for surveys, the Committee and the Government officer should give titles for the land when the people had decided what reserves they wanted and what lands were to be leased?—That plan which you mention of a Government officer acting in concert with a Committee chosen by the people is an idea I have had for a very long time. I have frequently spoken of it at Native meetings, and I am convinced it is the course that should be adopted. My idea is that, whether it be a large block, or a small block in which there are a large number of owners, the Committee should be appointed to carry out all transactions in relation to that land, whether leasing or selling, or whether it is for reserving land for farm purposes for the benefit of the Natives themselves. In all such cases a Committee should be appointed by some tribunal. The lands for which Committees were to be appointed should be gazetted, and the persons to be appointed on the Committee should be chosen in presence of the Court; and the Court should ask the owners present if they approved of the persons thus selected for the Committee. When the three, four, five, or whatever number of persons were to act on the Committee had been chosen, the Court should then make an order to that effect. The Committee should not be appointed by a deed which it would be necessary for every person interested in the block to sign. The great objection to signing a deed appointing a Committee would be that it would be hard to get the signatures of all the owners of the block, as they would be scattered over the country, some perhaps up in the Waikato, some in the Hauraki district, some in Hawke's Bay, and some elsewhere, thereby rendering it practically impossible to get all the owners to unite in signing such a deed. In all cases where the Native owners desire to have a Committee appointed to manage their lands, they should be required to give notice to the Registrar of the Court, who would thereupon have the application gazetted, and notice given to all parties interested to attend on a certain date, after which the Court would proceed to comply with the request of the people attending.