the Judges of this Native Land Court should be men who had had a legal education. After sitting with another Judge for twelve months they would pick up the Maori education. But in he case of those who had not had a legal training I found that there was a general disregard of the leading ideas in lawyers' minds—that is to say, precedents. I have known cases quoted to some of these Judges showing that a certain decision had been come to upon some particular point, and no notice was taken of it. The result is a great number of conflicting precedents. Laymen do not understand the importance of forming a common law in these matters. I should be very glad myself—to speak strongly; because I am not concerned—in favour of these Judges being appointed to the same status as Supreme Court Judges, and holding office during good behaviour.

675. Do you think this Court might be affiliated to or become a branch of the Supreme Court? —It is a subject I have not thought much about, and I would rather decline to answer that question if you will allow me.

676. Do you consider that the present system which obtains in the practice of the Native Land Court of the Judges running to and fro all over the country is advisable, or would you suggest their being fixed for certain districts?—I think it is better they should be strangers, and know nobody, as it were, in the places where they are called upon to adjudicate. I tried the other system, of locating one Judge at Wellington and another at Hawke's Bay; but it was not satisfactory, and during all my time I followed the system of sending strangers as much as possible. I found, myself, that in practice the less you knew about what was coming before you the better it was, not only in the Native Land Court, but in other Courts as well.

677. It preserves you from bias?—Yes.

678. *Mr. Rees.*] Do you think that the Native Committees or the Natives themselves in their meetings could facilitate the probable findings in the fixing of the tribal and hapu boundaries?—Do you mean that statutory Committee?

679. No; Committees appointed by the Natives amongst themselves. I mean the natural heads of the hapus and tribes?—Oh, yes! quite so. Having settled the matter amongst themselves, they could take the surveyors with them, show them the boundaries, and that would be the end of it.

680. And the working of the Court could be simplified by their practically fixing their own boundaries?—Practically it is so now. They produce their plan, and, as far as they are concerned, it is never objected to. Outsiders may object. It is a very singular thing, when you have a map showing the lands in question, and place it on the table, it seems to be accepted by everybody. It is not a question of boundaries with them; it is a question of title. They will take the plan as that of the block, and fight their case upon it, not even troubling about the boundary.

681. *Mr. Mackay.*] They would fight the question of ownership?—Yes.

682. The Court would then have to decide who were the proper owners?—Yes. I have seen in some cases a man who had not put in a claim, say, pointing to the block shown on the plan, "I am interested here;" and, the other side having said, "Yes, that is true," the man would have his name put in the title, and the plan would remain.

683. Would not a system of official agents tend to greater economy in the dealings between Natives and Europeans?—Oh! dear, yes, it would save a heap of money, and would secure them altogether from unjust dealings.

684. It would put a stop absolutely to unfair dealings, because the transaction would be carried on publicly, and by organized bodies?—Yes. I think we should get that system established, and it would tend to counteract the opinion formed in the other colonies of the character of our Crown grants, whose value has been greatly injured. By adopting such a system we should induce a greater number of purchasers to come and settle in the country. It is a serious thing to have the Crown titles of the colony falling in esteem amongst its neighbours. There are two blocks of land, called Pokohu and Matahina, in the Bay of Plenty district, near the sea. The title passed by purchase. Of course I did not know of this at the time, but learnt some parts of it subsequently; I was only concerned with the effects of what was done. The title passed by Native-land purchase to three gentlemen in Sydney, of whom Sir John Allen, a man of position and of wealth, was the principal one. I was afterwards down in that part of the country myself—that is to say, shortly after the Court had sat—and I was told that the question of ownership was decided to a large extent on one point. One party of claimants said that their houses were on a certain place, their cultivations were on another, and that the chips of a canoe which had been constructed by this party were to be found on another, and so on. The other party said that there was no such thing; that they did not exist; that the houses and everything else were a pure invention. The presiding Judge said, "Oh! here is a clear question of fact, and I will send the Assessor to see for himself." Both parties swore with the greatest confidence. They accordingly sent the Assessor, and he came back after three days and reported that there was nothing to be seen, and the judgment was greatly decided by that report. When I was there I found that this party had got hold of the Assessor and made an appointment with him. They took him away with them and made him comfortable in the way the Natives used to do, and in the morning they took him twenty miles off from the place that was to be examined and pointed out to him places where the houses, cultivations, and canoe-chips, according to their account, were said by the other party to be. Of course, they were quite remote from the places that had really been indicated. I inquired into it, and I found that it was as alleged. I thought it my duty to report to the Government, and I did so, asking them in the first place to dismiss the Assessor. The result was that the Government put a clause in that Act which Parliament used to pass every session, called "The Special Powers and Contracts Act," directing the cause to be reheard *de novo*, and destroying the old grant. Somebody in the House got up and said, "You ought to provide that in case any of the old owners who joined in the sale prove to be owners in the rehearing they should have no new claims; because it is true that they sold, and, as the £5,000 has been paid, it is only fair that their share should go to the European purchaser." That was fair; but the Government would not have it, and the clause passed, and half of the estate went to the old