questions could elicit any more information than you have given us. The Commissioners would therefore be glad to hear you upon any subject that you have not yet taken up?—I wish before saying anything further to ask a question with regard to the circular issued by the Commissioners. I have spoken with respect to the regulations of the Native Land Court. I wish now to ask a question with regard to the word *tuku* (transfer) in the Maori circular issued by the Commissioners. I do not mean the word *hoko* (sale). We will come to that presently. The word *tuku* is used for "transfer," "dispose of," or "alienate." That is, in reference to lands that have been disposed of not strictly according to law. What is the meaning of "dispose"?

830. It means any method of dealing with land, whether by sale, mortgage, or lease from the Maori to the European?—Would that include the case of a gift, where the land was given for nothing?

831. Yes; any method whatever by which the land passes from one to another. In many cases in the South of which you are not aware up here among the Ngapuhi, great numbers of owners have signed deeds to Europeans, and so particular have some of the laws been to defend the Natives, and so many things had to be done in a hurry and bustle, that one or two things were not done, and the omission of these destroyed the whole transaction. Because one little peg is not put in, the whole framework tumbles to pieces. For instance, there are fifty owners in one block of land?—That "disposition" would be in connection with the selling of land?

832. Yes; or a lease, or a mortgage, or even a conveyance by trust—a gift. Seeing, however, that up here there are but few of these cases to which you have referred, the Commissioners did not think it wise to take up time with inquiries under that heading. We understood there were but few of such cases here, and that they principally exist further south?—The reason why I put the question is, that I wished to ask about transfers or disposals of land from Maoris to Maoris. These disposals of land by one Maori to another were called "gifts," and are according to Maori custom strictly legal, and proper, and valid. From the times of our ancestors to the present time such disposal of land from hapus to hapus, or from individuals to individuals, have been regarded as just and proper and duly recognised. There are many instances of land being claimed in the Native Land Court by the right of gift from former ancestors, and gifts made in former times have been held good all through, and the descendants were not able afterwards to dispute those gifts or set them aside. Now, with regard to these gifts new difficulties have sprung up in the Native Land Court. Efforts are being made to set aside these old gifts. People arise and give evidence in Court, saying that they know nothing about these gifts, and that if they were gifts they should not be recognised. It is the Europeans alone who incite people to take up that position. Perhaps it is the lawyers or those other people who are acting for the Natives who have induced them to repudiate these ancient gifts. So in that way these old dispositions of land, made by way of gift, that would be and should be recognised according to Maori custom, are disregarded. That is only in instances where deceitful people get up and endeavour to destroy these gifts. Perhaps it is from European sources that the idea comes that these gifts are not good. That is the trouble that arises in the Native Land Court in relation to some land. My contention is, that it is highly improper to attempt by means of European laws to destroy a custom like that, which has been recognised by the Maoris. Such a custom should be recognised both as regards the past and for the present. It is a principle of honour amongst the Maoris to regard gifts of this sort, and these gifts therefore should be respected and given effect to. Now, with regard to the sale of land, I am not in a position to speak clearly, nor with regard to deceit and improprieties that have been practised in the selling of land. In cases where there are a large number of owners in a block, and one of them desires singly to part with his interest, difficulties often arise in consequence. The trouble is this: that there may be a hapu which may have only 1,000 acres, and So-and-so desire that they may have this land to live upon for themselves and their children; but one of them begins selling, and in that way the land passes away from them. Then, there is another difficulty: Should the land be subdivided, so that each individual owner knows his particular portion, scarcely will a year elapse before the whole is disposed of, and the people are left utterly landless. Thus, by the appointment of Committees, as has been suggested, they would be able to calmly review the whole circumstances, and then see what would be the best to do with the land. With regard to that portion of the circular in which the Commissioners state that they will inquire into difficulties that have arisen between Europeans and Maoris with regard to the land, I wish to ask the Commissioners if I may make a statement concerning the very great difficulty that afflicts us in respect of our lands.

833. Certainly?—This is a very great trouble indeed, and presses sorely upon the numerous hapus and people, but I am somewhat apprehensive that the Commissioners may not allow me to speak of this great trouble to which I allude. It relates to lands taken by the Government, but does not relate to lands that were purchased during the time of the Government in New Zealand.

834. So far from wishing to stop this sort of thing that you desire to speak about, we want to hear it fully?—I wish to say a few words upon a point that was omitted by Wi Katene. [See minutes of meetings with Natives and others for report of Waimate North meeting.] It is in respect to something important that affects the Natives through the rehearings—that is, the demand for a deposit of £5 or more, even up to £50, before the rehearing can be granted. This is one of the other matters in connection with the Native Land Court that press heavily upon the Natives. Another thing that the Natives object to is that in the case of surveys the amount to be paid is settled by the Court, and then that the Court can order it to be charged as a lien upon the land. We think that all expenses connected with the survey should be settled between the parties in the Supreme Court, or such other Courts as deal with these matters, and that the Native Land Court should not adjudicate upon the costs to be paid by Natives for surveys. Then, too, in the case of lands that were surveyed in past times, there were no maps produced, although the surveys may have been made as far back as ten years ago, or in some cases twenty years ago. Where the trouble arises to the Natives is that the money they pay for these surveys is all wasted. This